

**“Kirkman and Moore’s THE
WALKING DEAD is so good I wish I
wrote it.”**

-Larry Young



**“Engrossing as well as just plain gross.
Rather than take the obvious path,
Kirkman weaves a subtle and unexpected
tale of ordinary people trying to survive
in extraordinary times.”**

-Scott Kurtz



CHARACTERS



RICK

status: alive

Rick was a small town cop before the zombie plague hit. He has become the leader of the group he has sought refuge with.

relations:
LORI (wife)
CARL (son)



SHANE

status: dead

Shane was Rick's partner. An unhealthy infatuation for Lori drove him insane. He eventually tried to kill Rick, but was shot by Carl moments before he could pull the trigger.

relations:
none

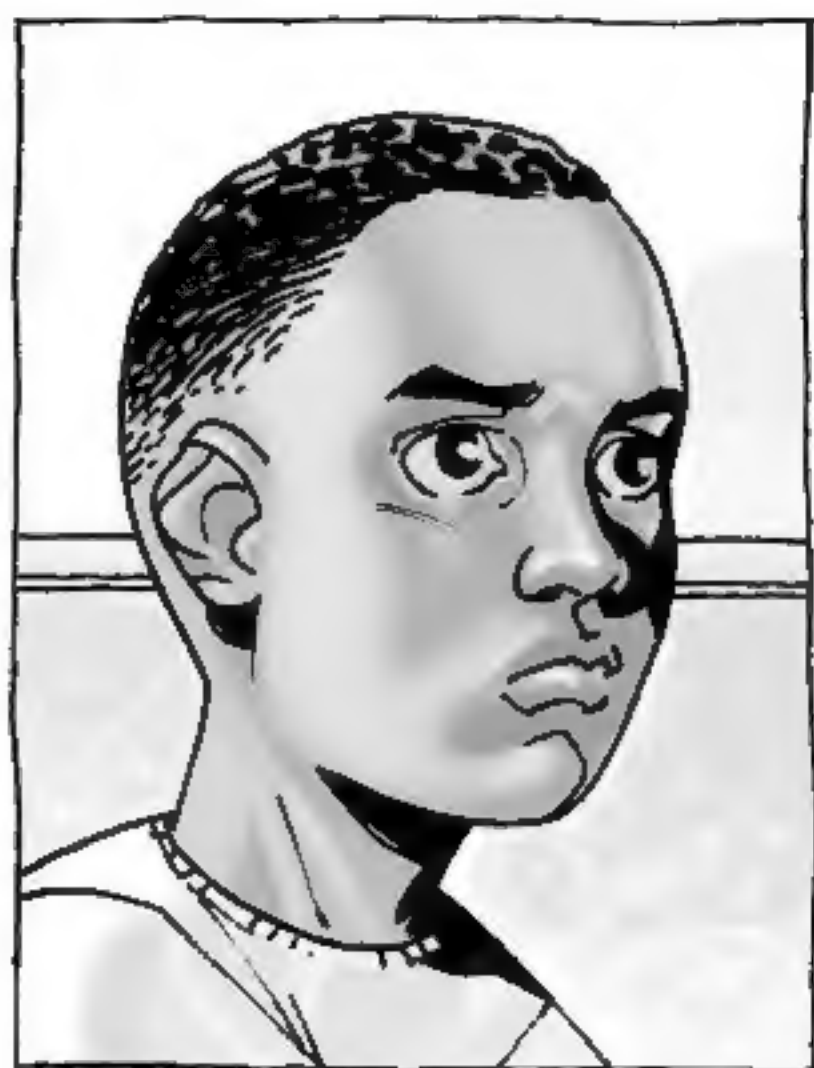


MORGAN

status: unknown

Morgan and his son Duane have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Little is known of thier current whereabouts.

relations:
DUANE (son)



DUANE

status: unknown

Duane and his father have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Duane likes to talk about bodily functions.

relations:
MORGAN (father)

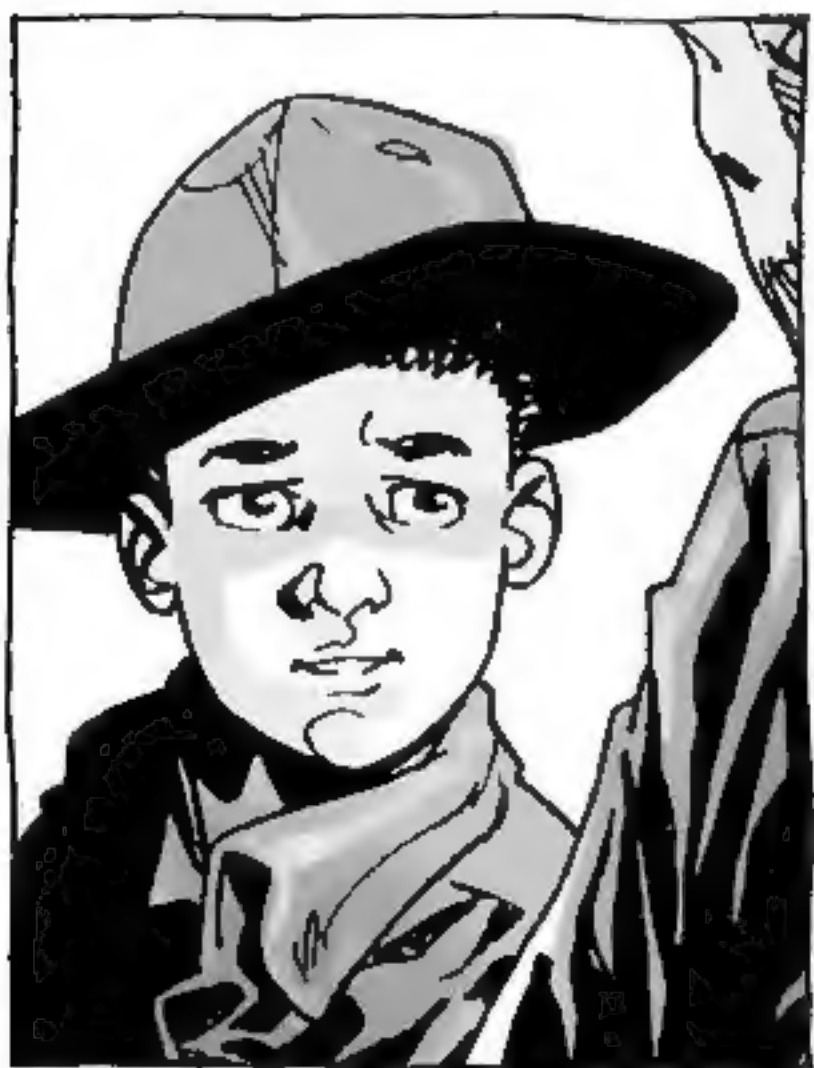


LORI

status: alive

Lori had an affair with Rick's partner Shane and is now pregnant. It is unknown who the child's father is. Rick is unaware of the affair.

relations:
RICK (husband)
CARL (son)



CARL

status: alive

Carl has saved his father's life but in doing so he has killed a man. The incident still weighs heavey on his conscience.

relations:
RICK (father)
LORI (mother)
SOPHIA (girlfriend)



JIM

status: dead

Jim watched his entire family get slaughtered as he escaped Atlanta. He was the first in the camp to die of a zombie bite.

relations:
none



ALLEN

status: alive

Allen is still haunted by the death of his wife. His grief is so severe he has begun to neglect his children.

relations:
DONNA (wife)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



DONNA

status: dead

Donna was the most outspoken person in the camp. She was killed by zombies in Wilshire Estates.

relations:
ALLEN (husband)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



BEN & BILLY

status: alive

Twin sons of Allen and Donna. They really don't say much. Especially after the death of thier mother.

relations:
ALLEN (father)
DONNA (mother)



GLENN

status: alive

Glenn was the camp scavenger, always venturing into Atlanta in search of goods. He had a crush on Carol but is now with Maggie, Hershel's daughter.

relations:
MAGGIE (girlfriend)



DALE

status: alive

After losing his wife Dale met up with Amy and Andrea on his way to Atlanta. After Amy's death he and Andrea fell in love.

relations:
ANDREA (girlfriend)

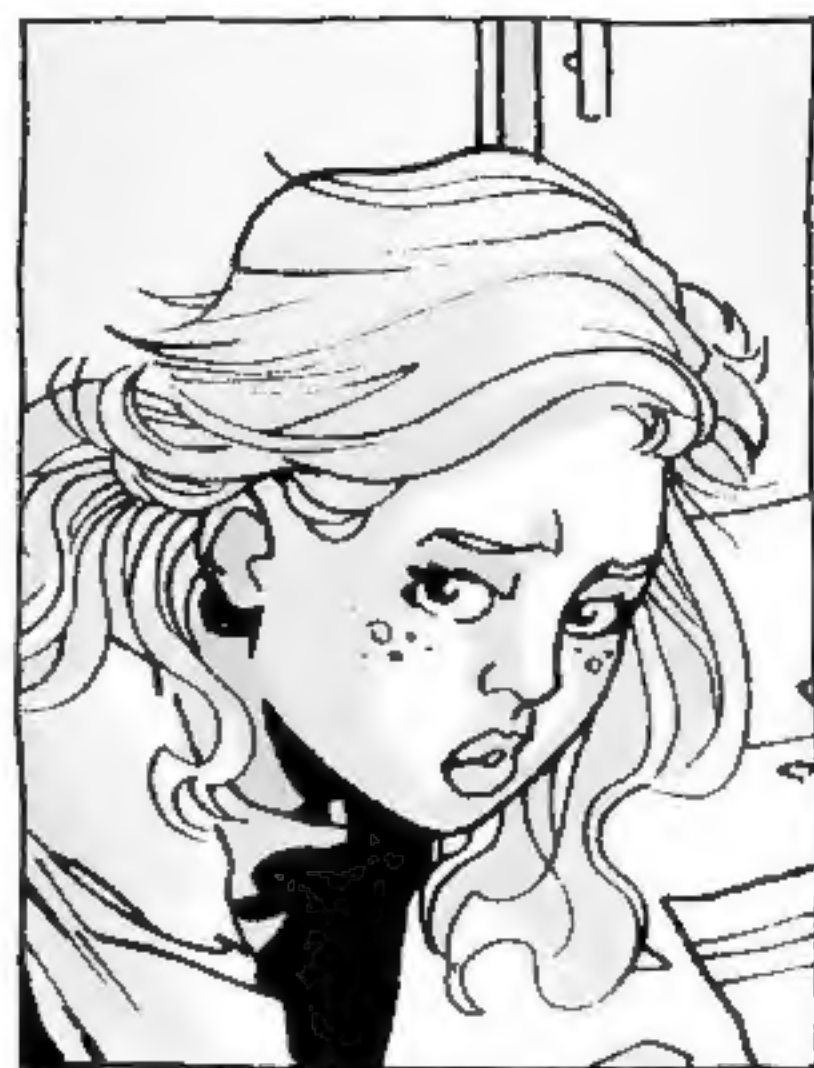


CAROL

status: alive

Carol is insecure and very timid. She and Lori have become close friends. She is currently with Tyreese.

relations:
SOPHIA (daughter)
TYREESE (boyfriend)



SOPHIA

status: alive

After a long period of constant nagging, Sophia has convinced Carl to be her boyfriend. They hold hands.

relations:
CAROL (mother)
CARL (boyfriend)



ANDREA

status: alive

Andrea is the resident sharp shooter of the group. After watching her sister die, she's found comfort in the arms of Dale.

relations:
AMY (sister)
DALE (boyfriend)

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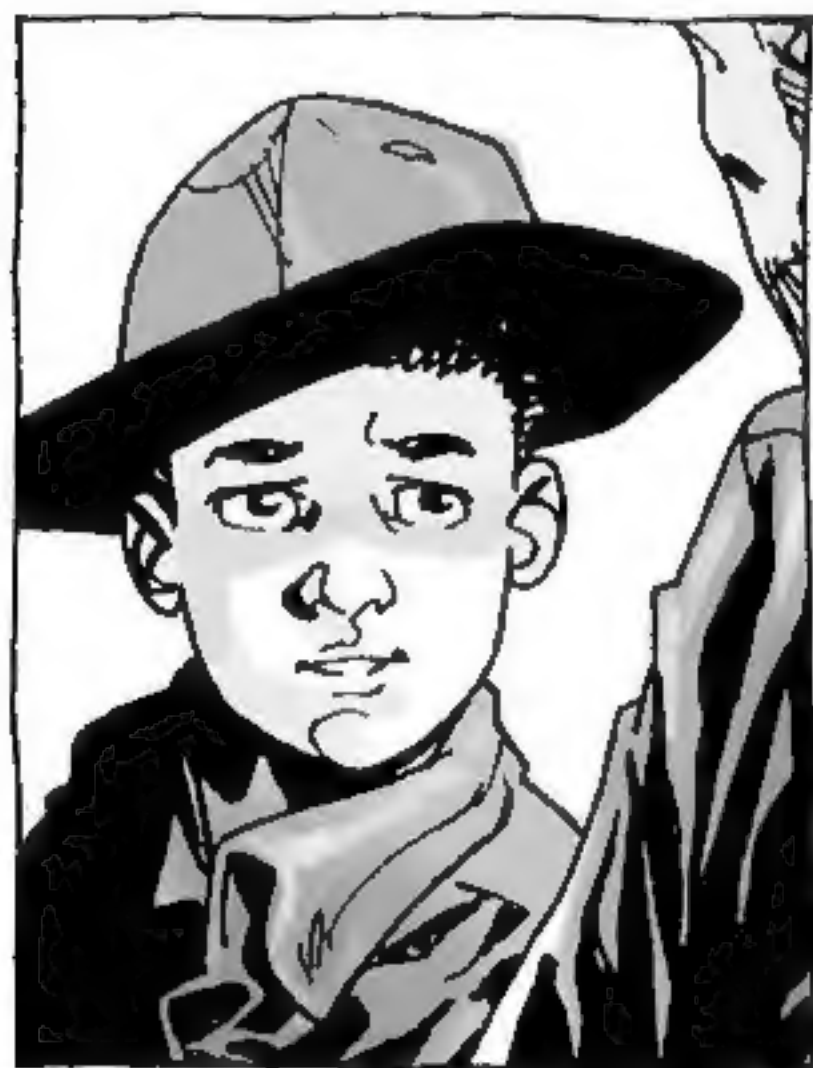


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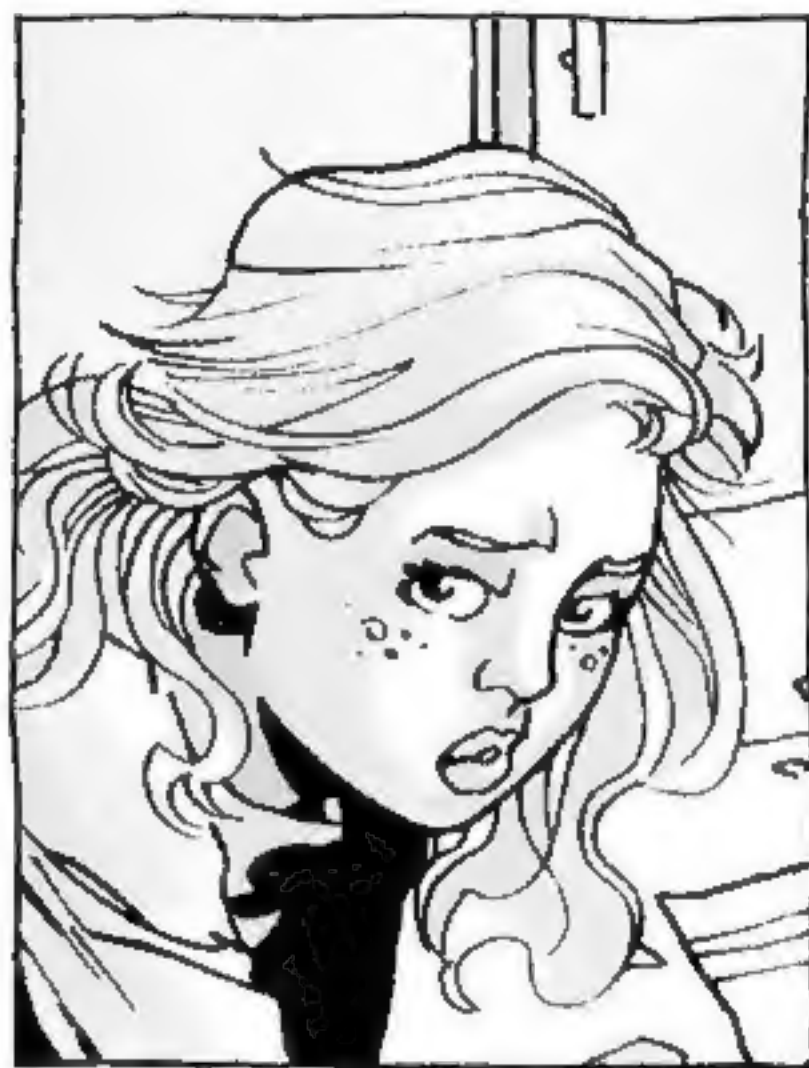


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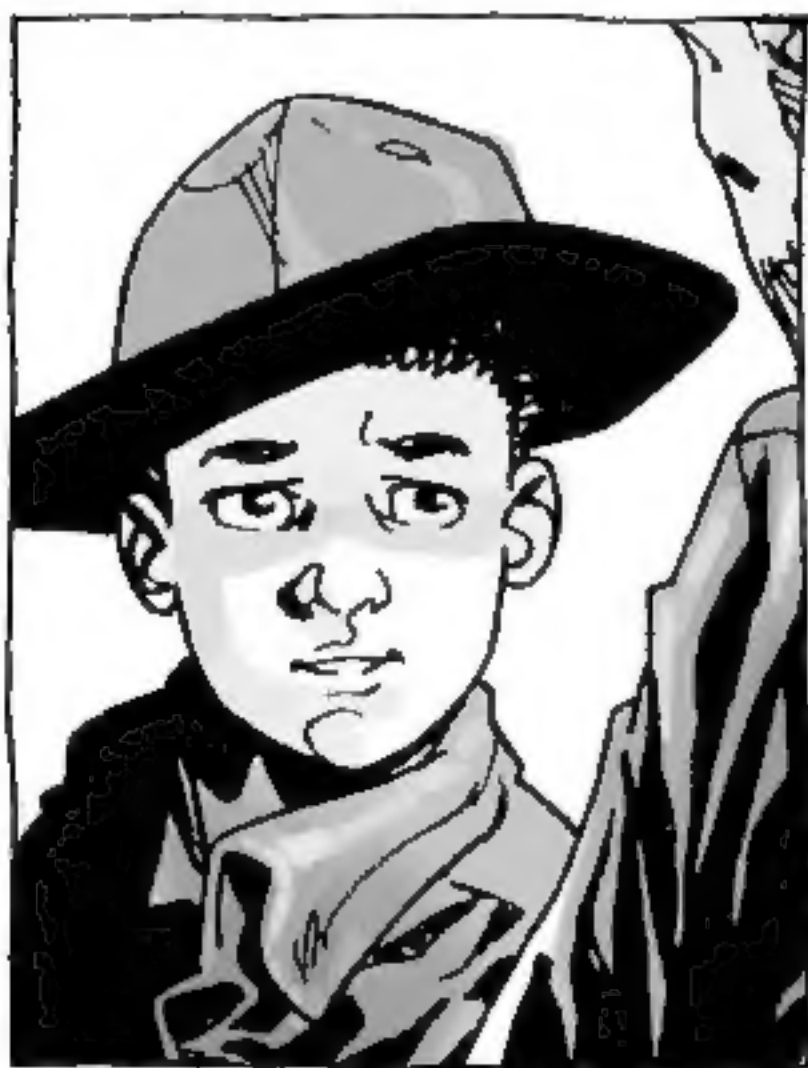


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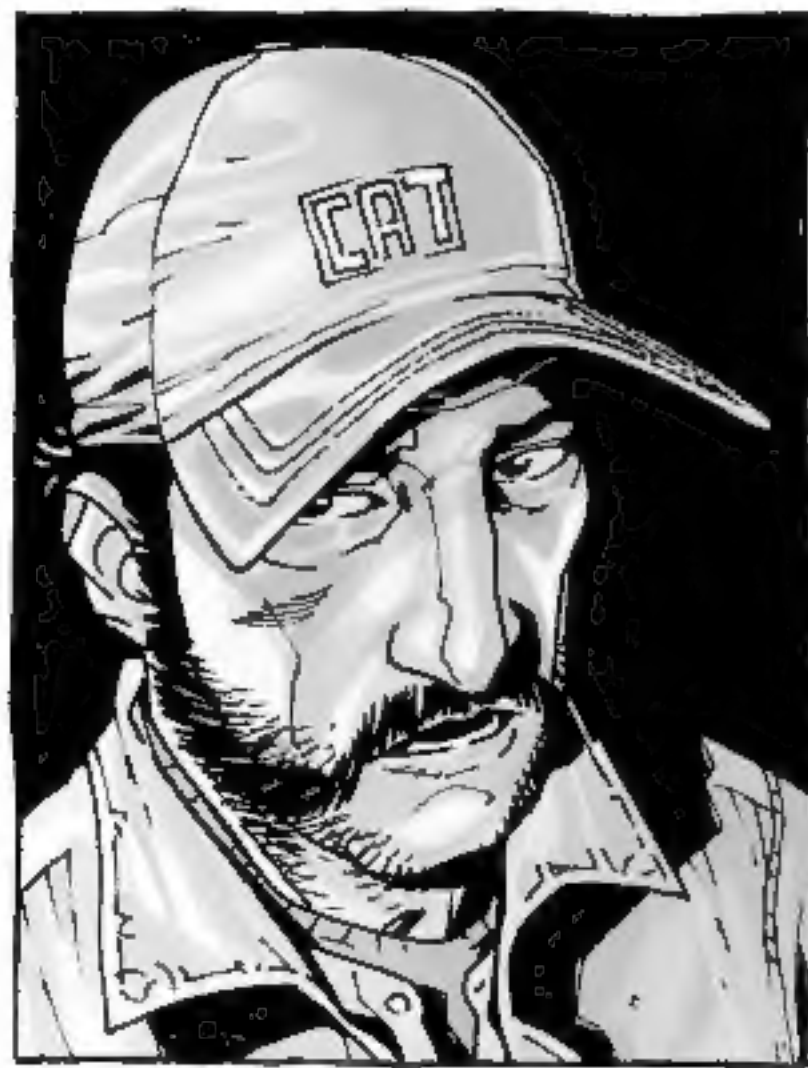


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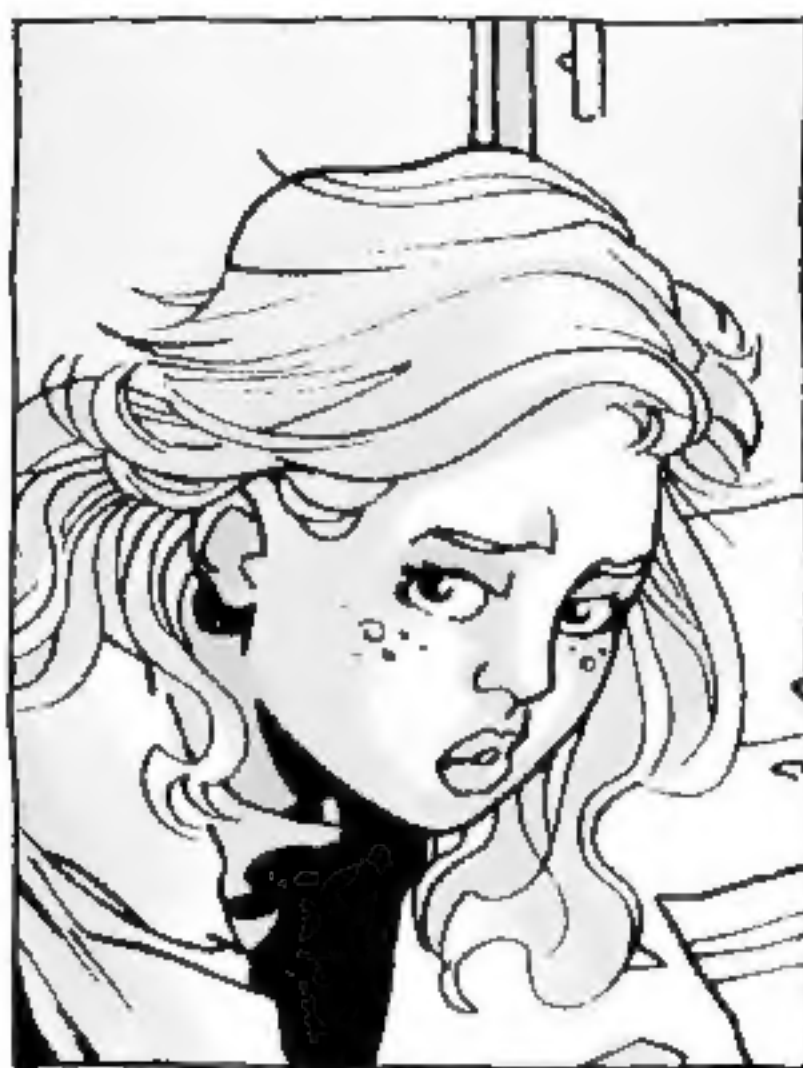


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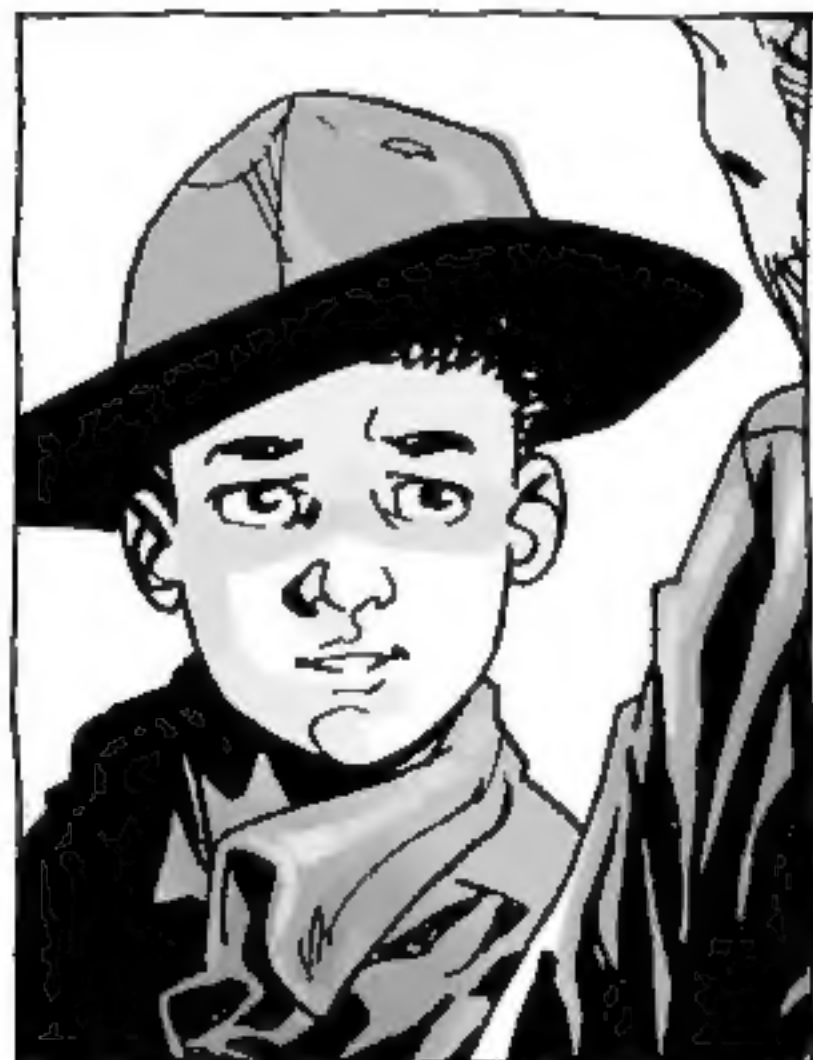


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SOPHIA (girlfriend)



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CHARACTERS



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status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

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JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

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CHRIS (boyfriend)



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Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

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HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
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LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:
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status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:
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status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
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relations:
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PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:
OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:
none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



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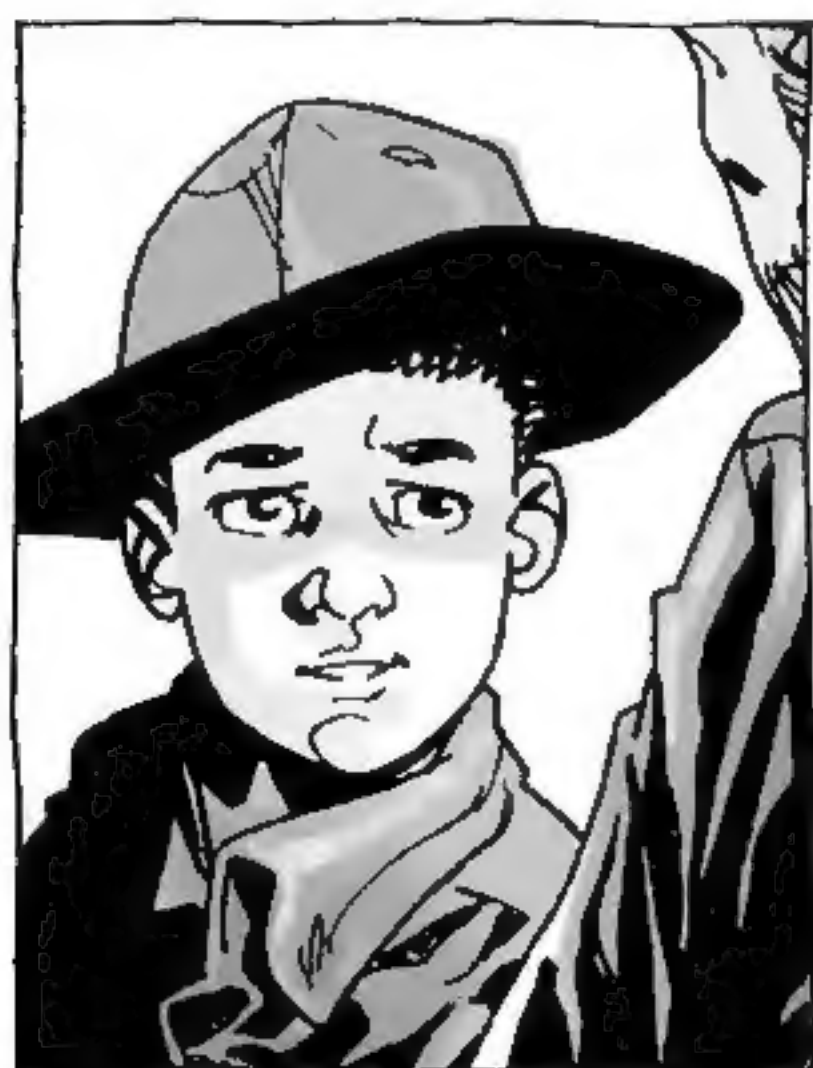


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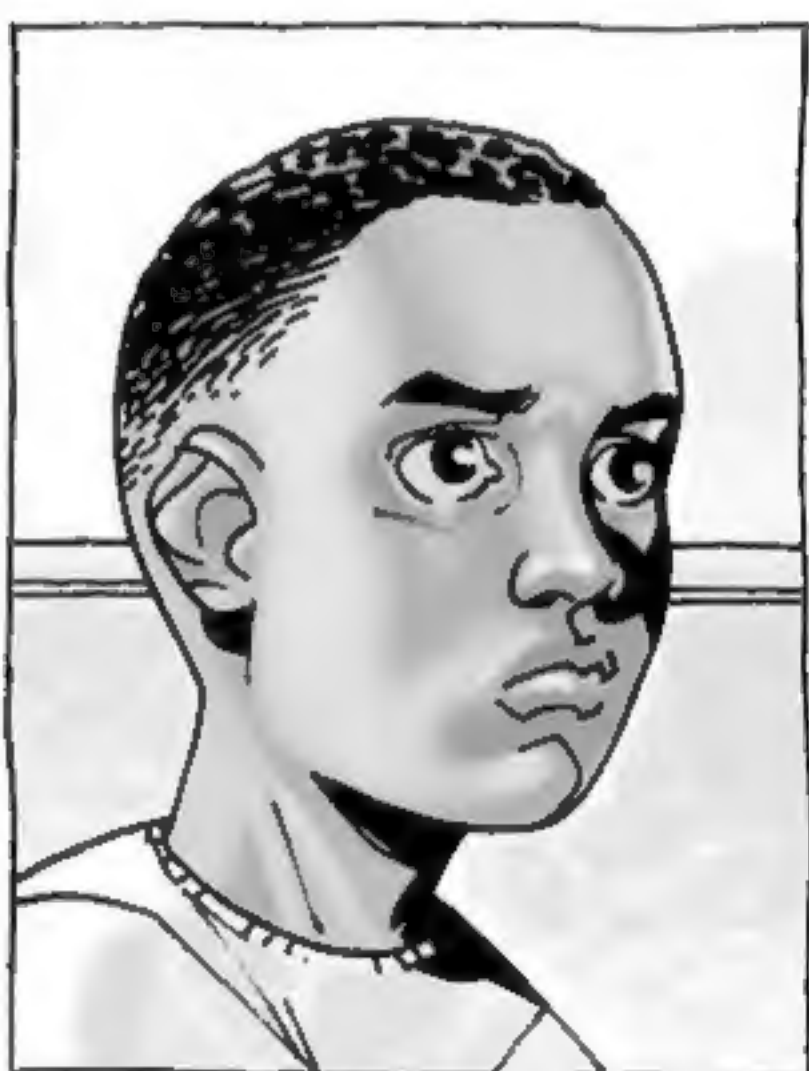


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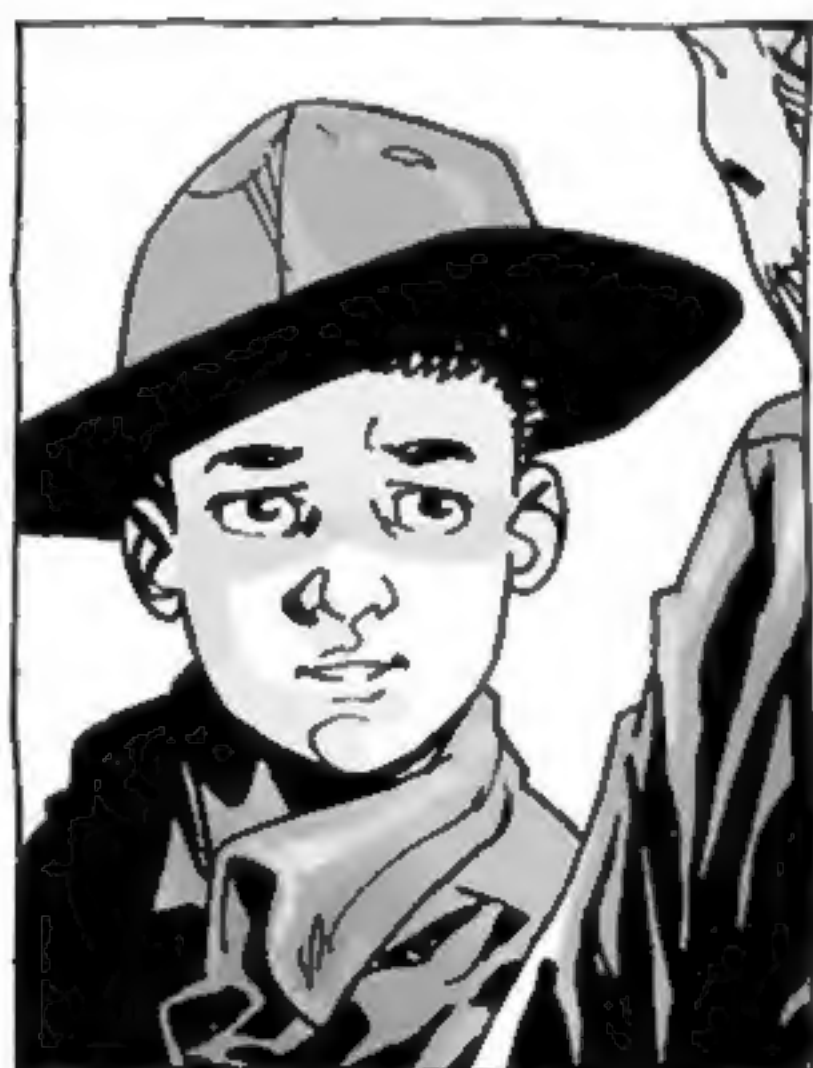


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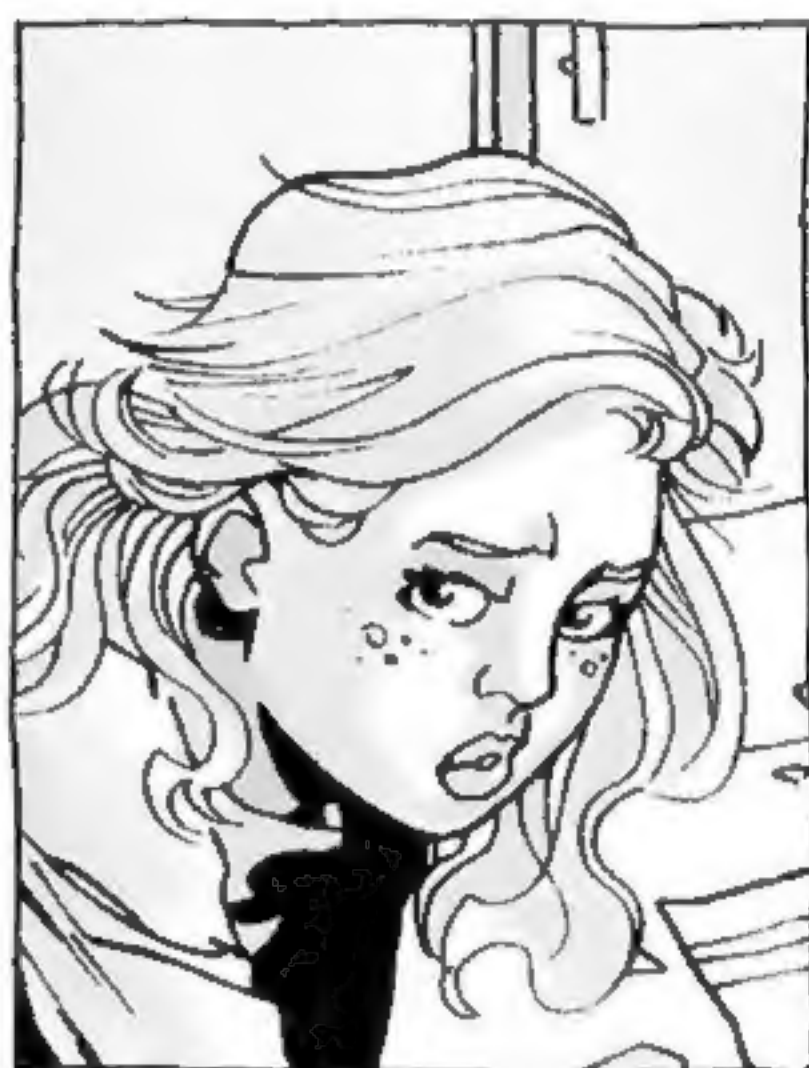


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THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:

ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:

JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:

TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:

JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

Otis was living on Hershel's farm for safety. He has stayed behind to take care of the livestock while preparations are being made to move them to the prison.

relations:

PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:

SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:

OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:

none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:

none

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:
ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:
JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:
TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:
JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

Otis was living on Hershel's farm for safety. He has stayed behind to take care of the livestock while preparations are being made to move them to the prison.

relations:
PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:
OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:
none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:
ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:
JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:
TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:
JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

Otis was living on Hershel's farm for safety. He has stayed behind to take care of the livestock while preparations are being made to move them to the prison.

relations:
PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:
OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:
none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:
ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:
JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:
TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:
JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

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relations:
PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:
HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:
OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:
none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:
none

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



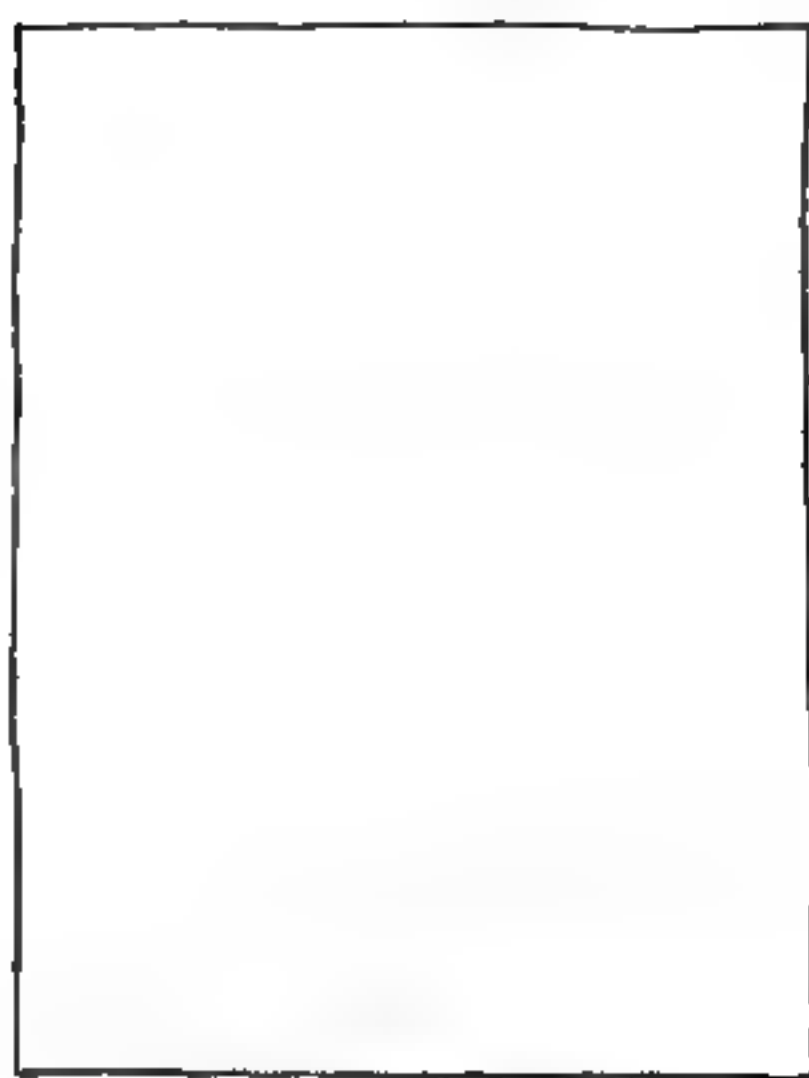
DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

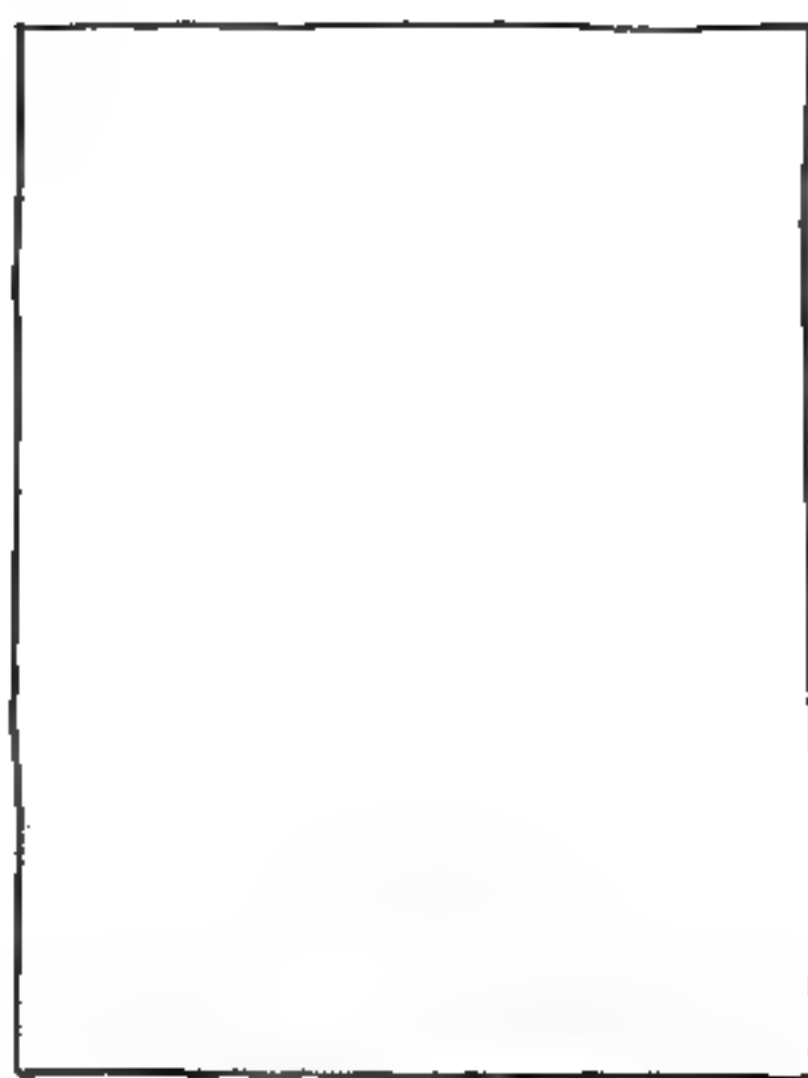
relations:
ANDREW (boyfriend)



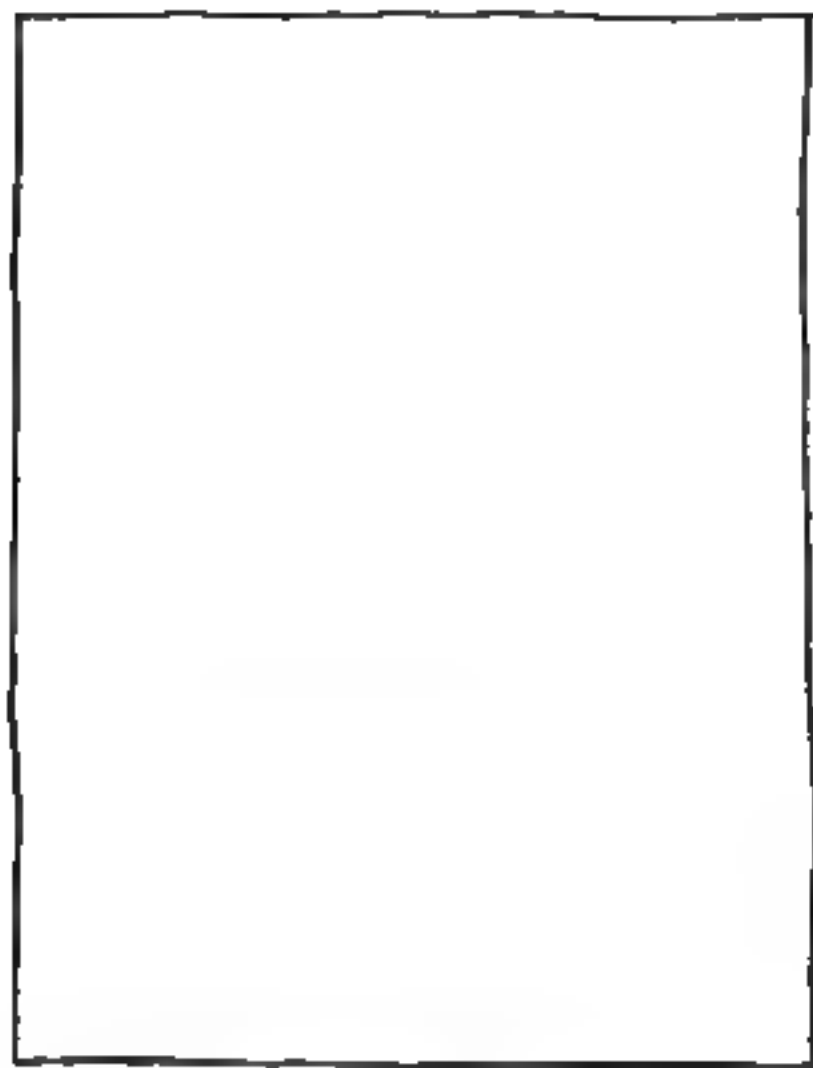
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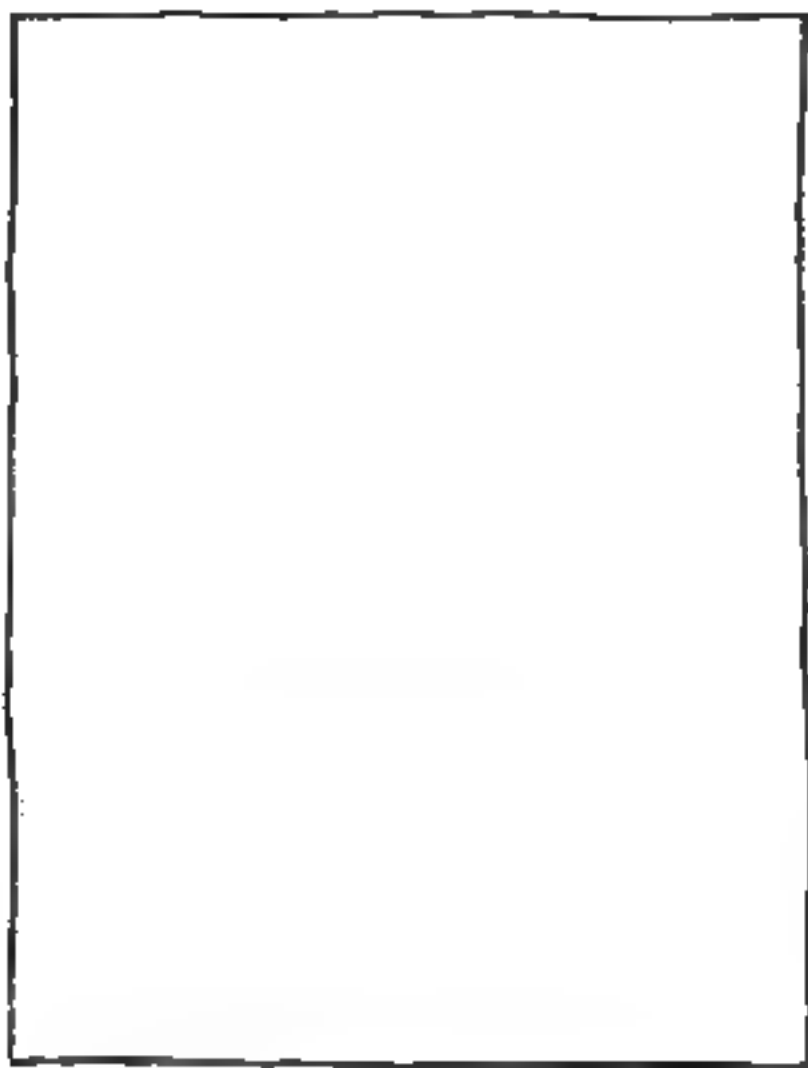
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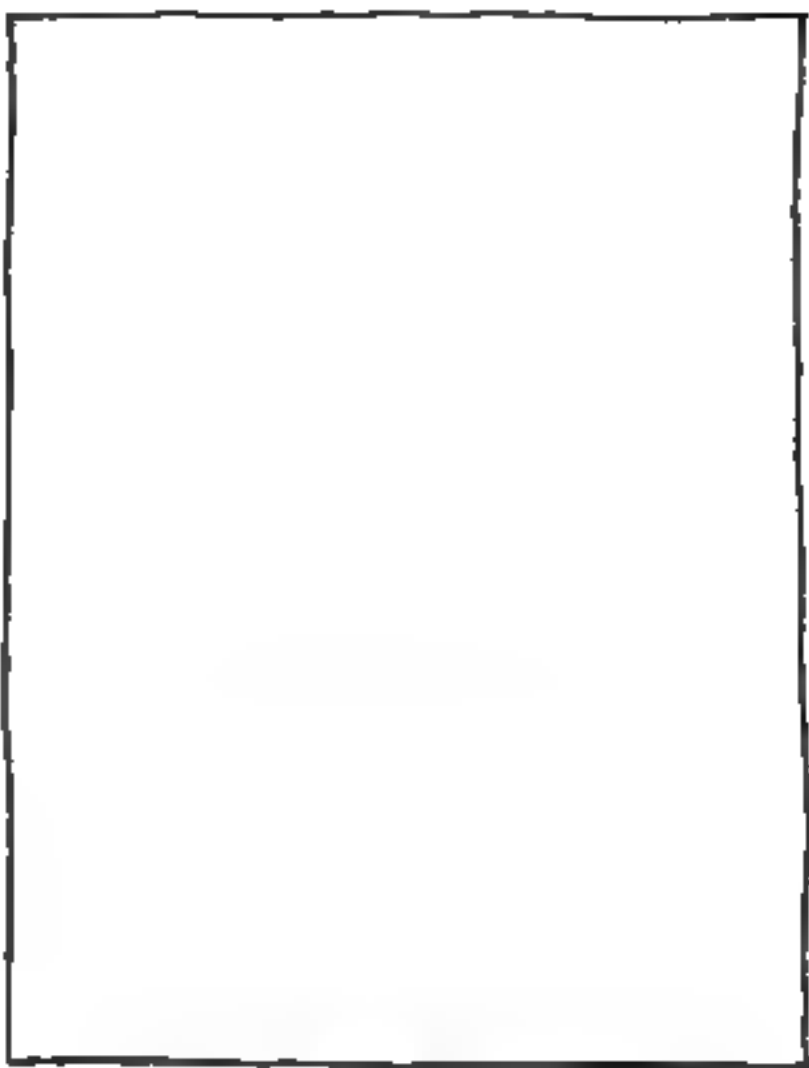
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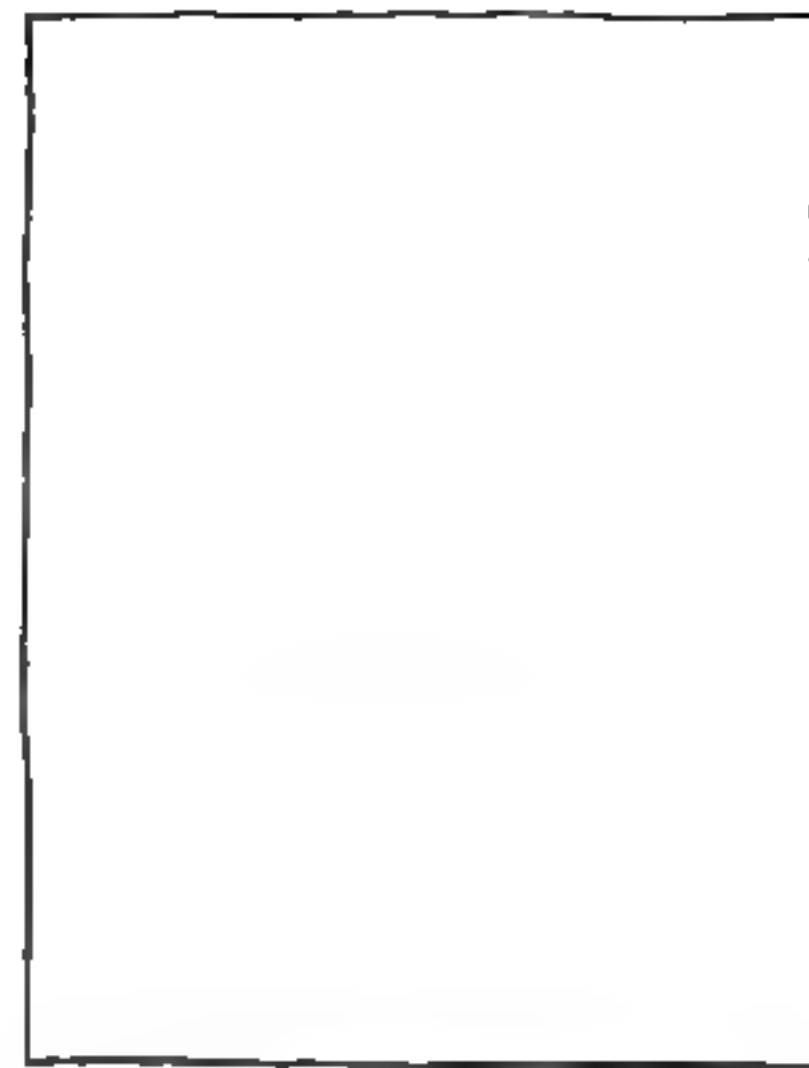
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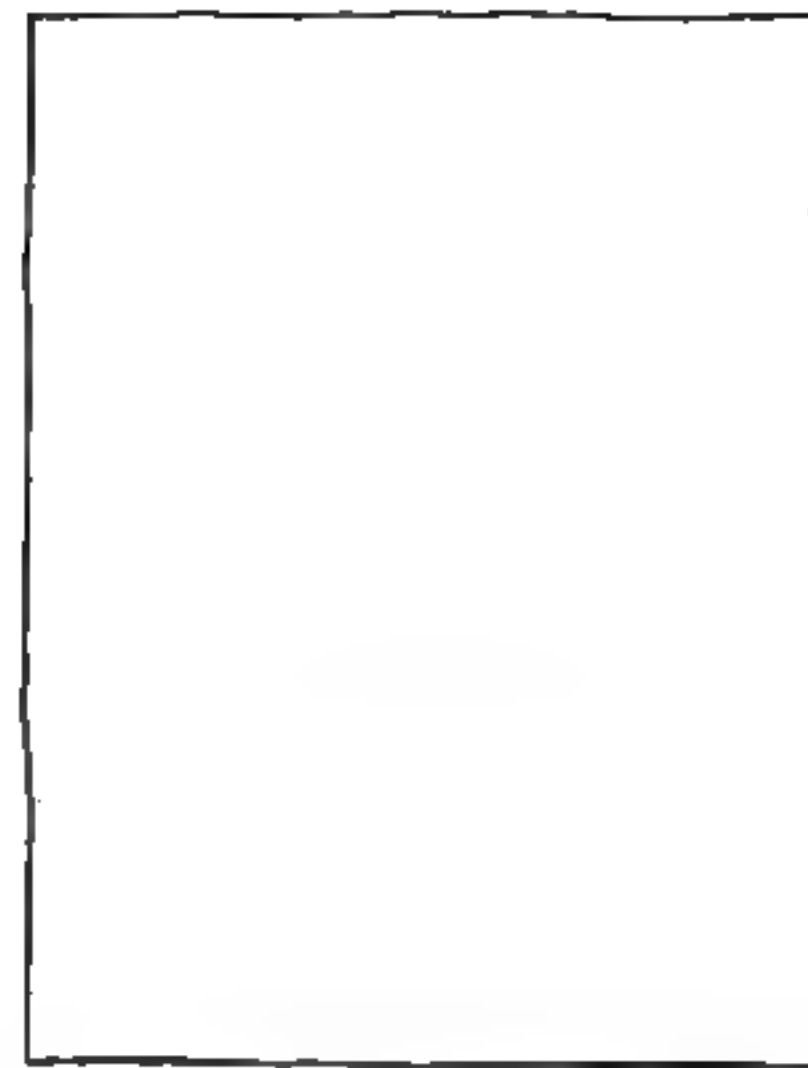
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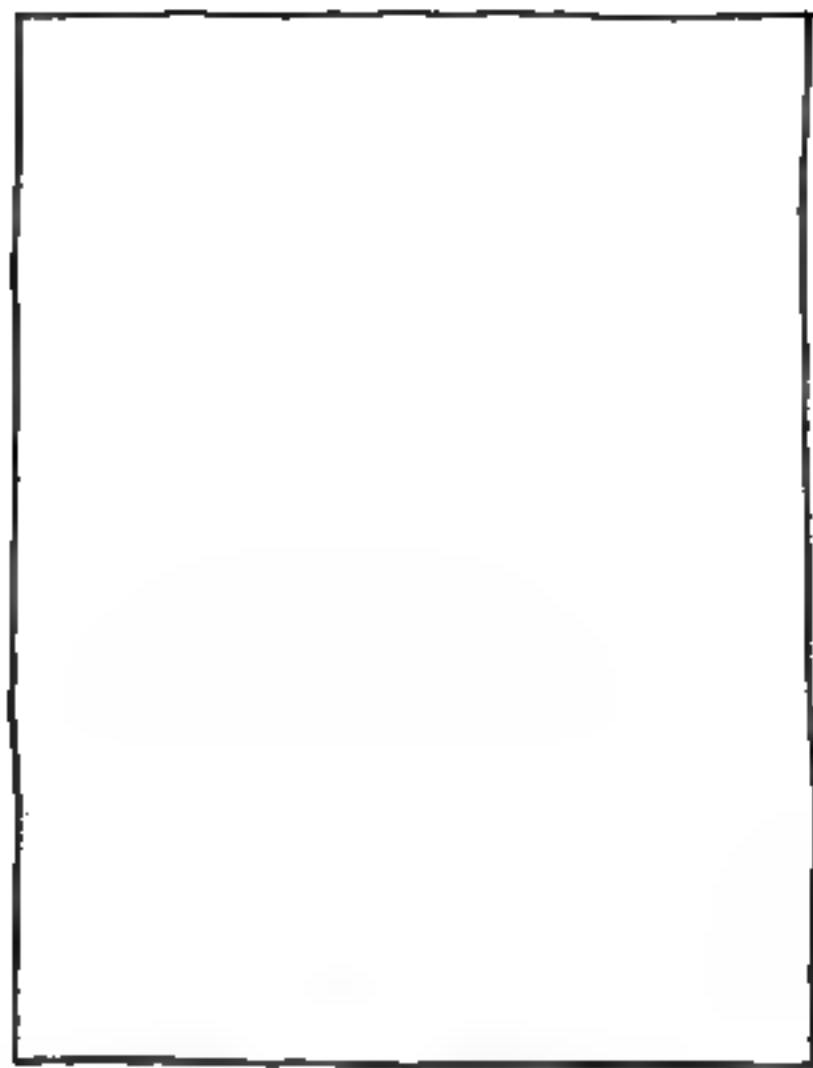
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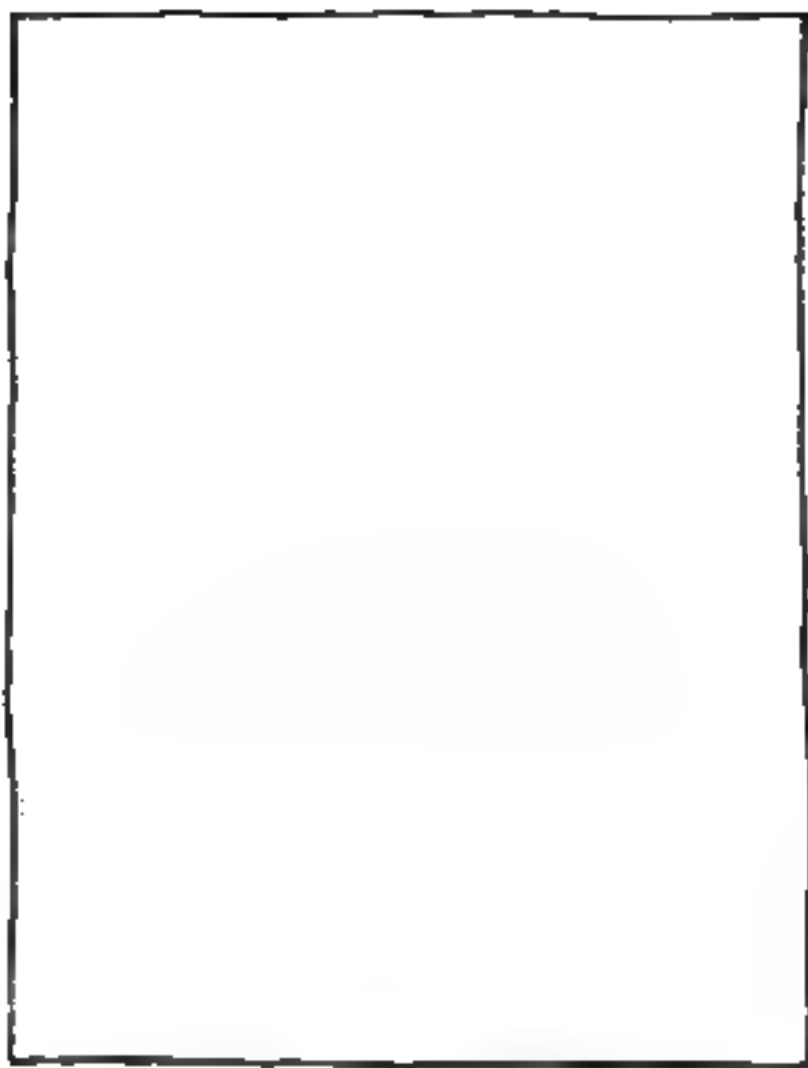
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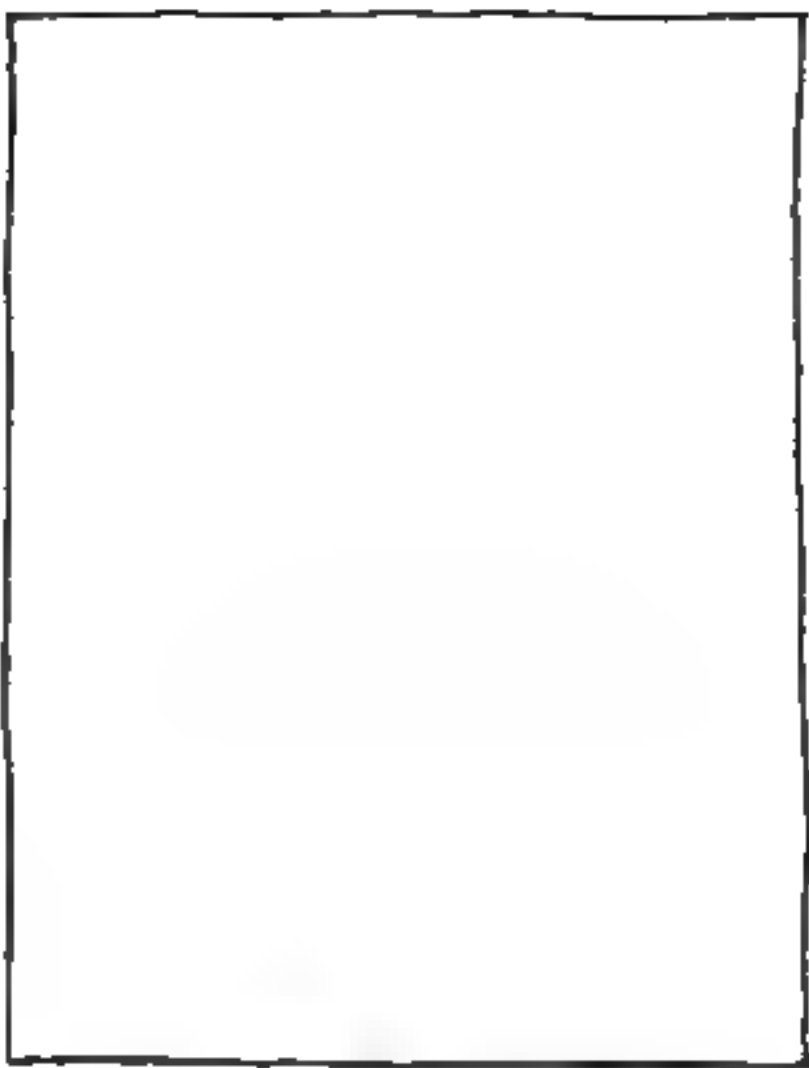
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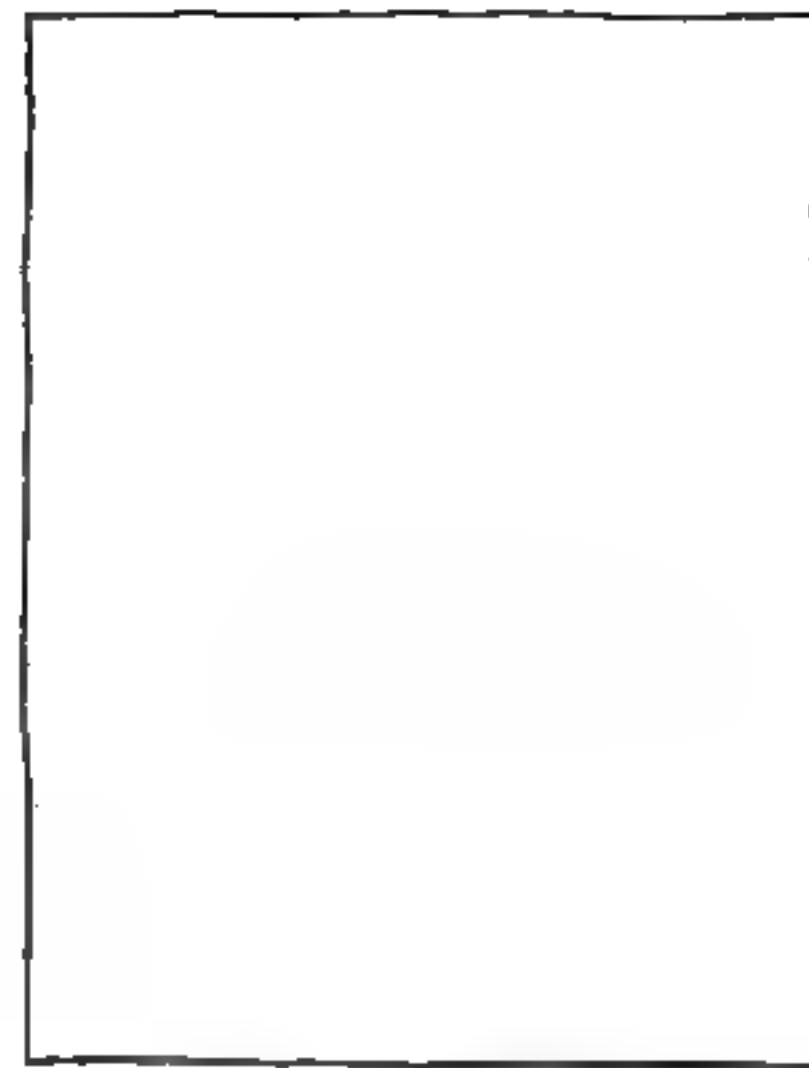
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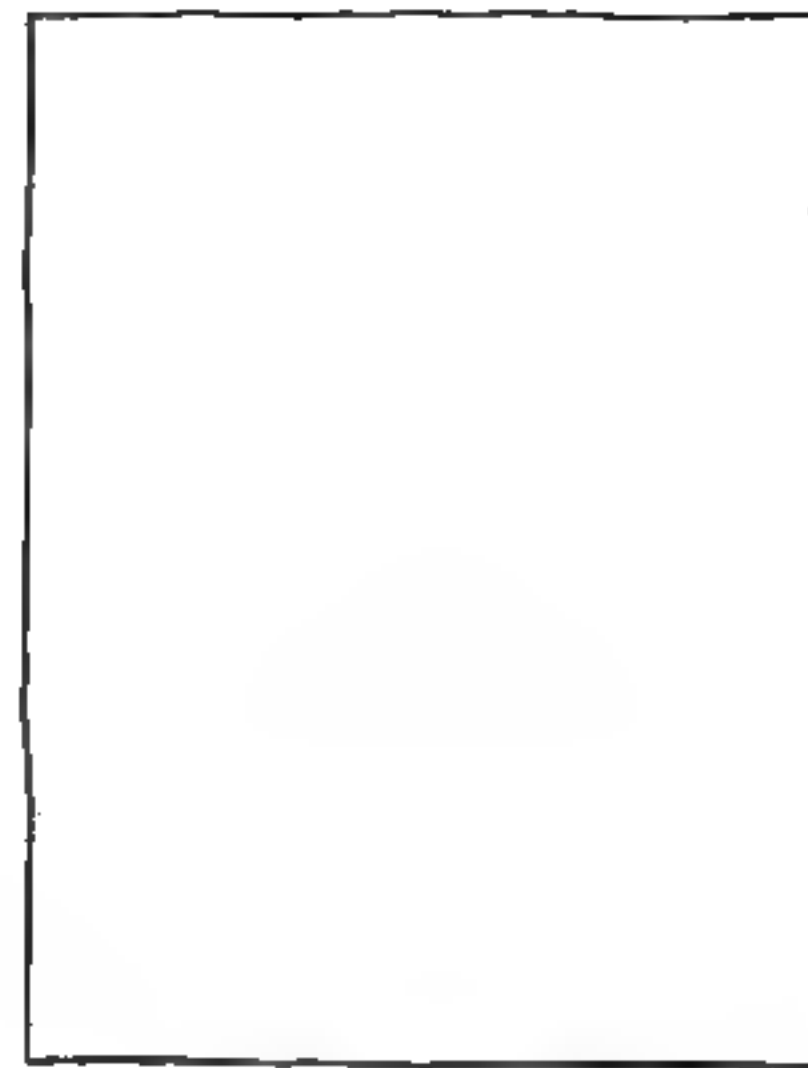
**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



MICHONNE

status: alive
Little is currently known about Michonne.

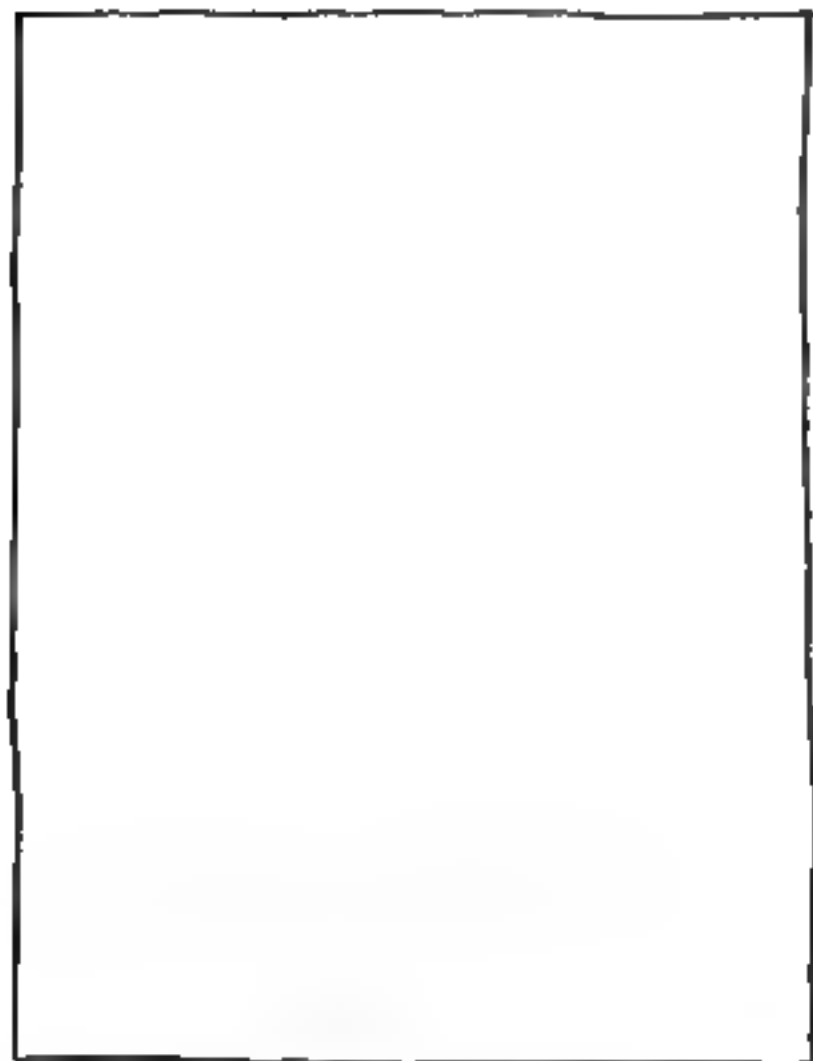
relations:
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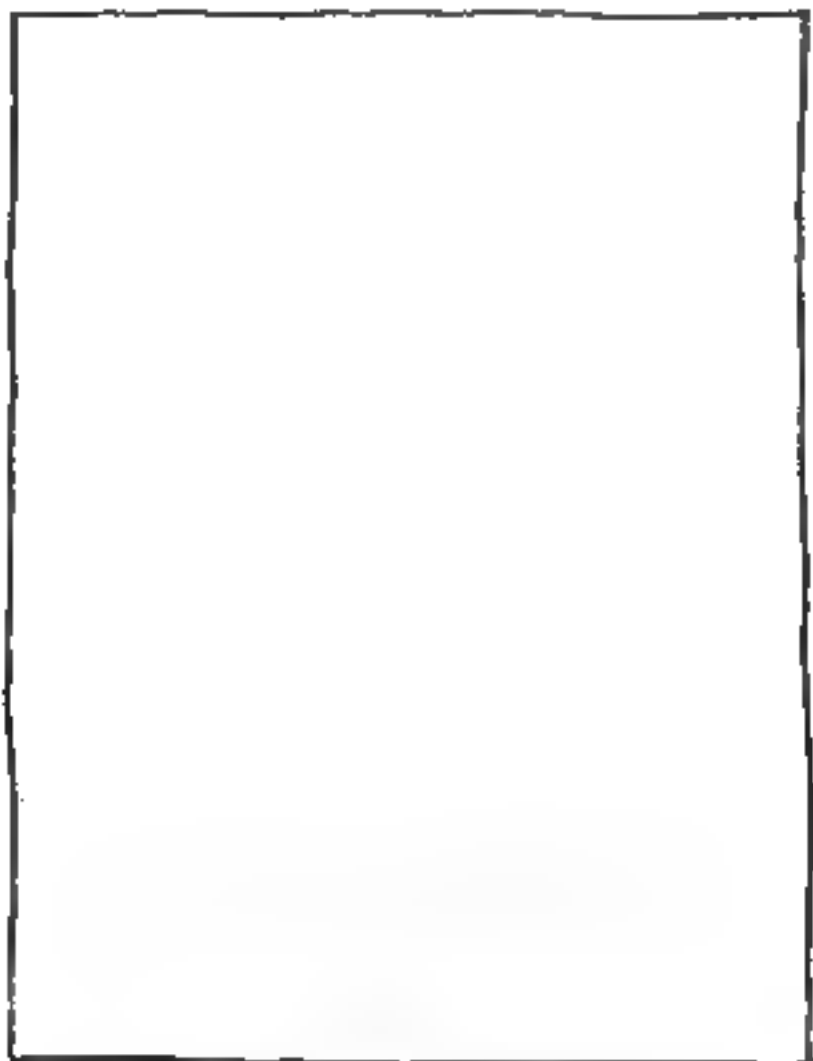
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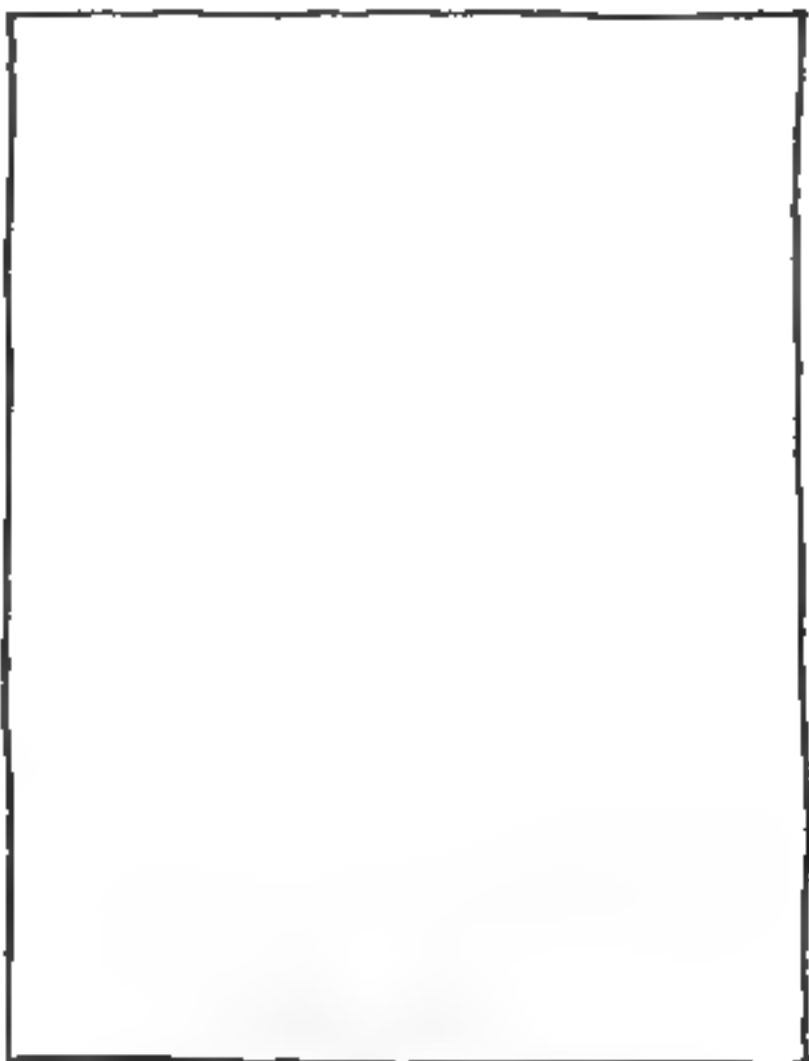
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SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



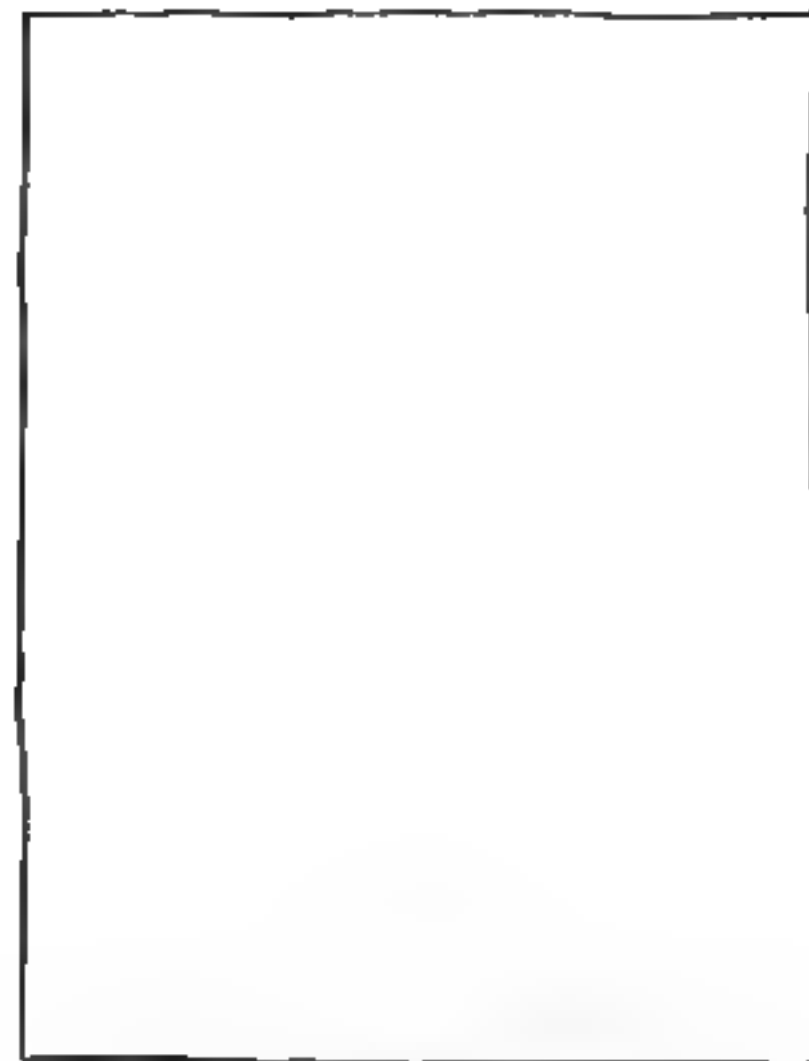
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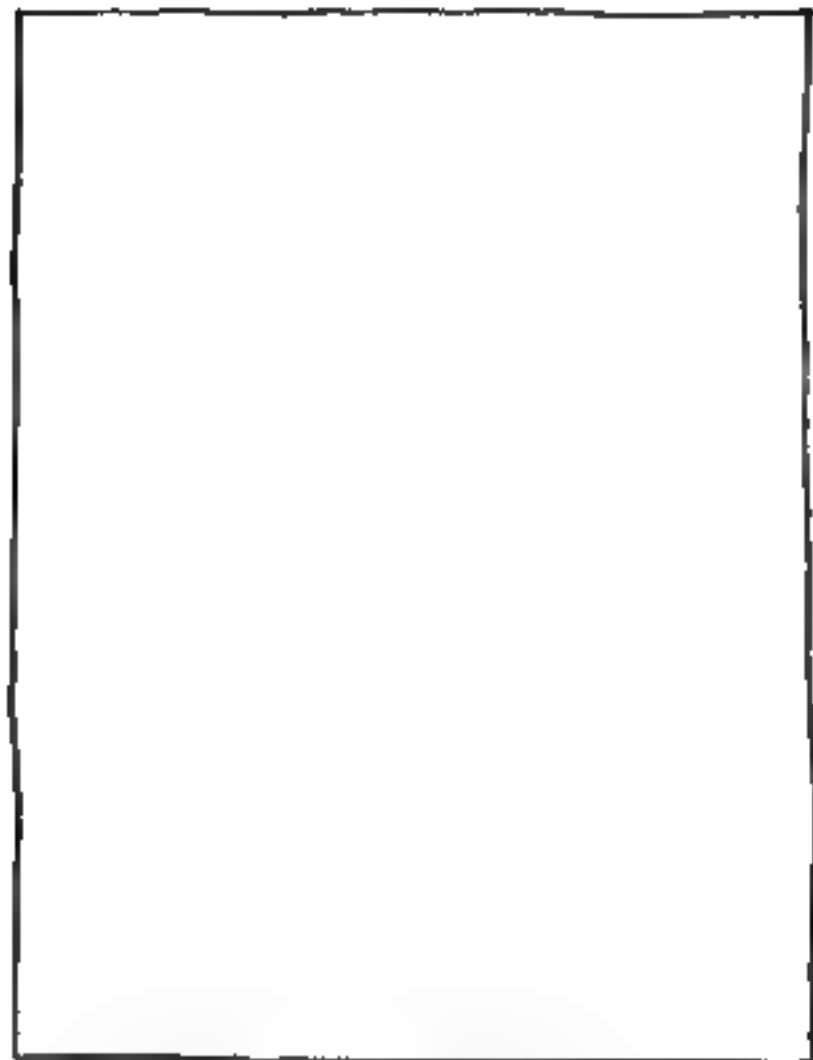
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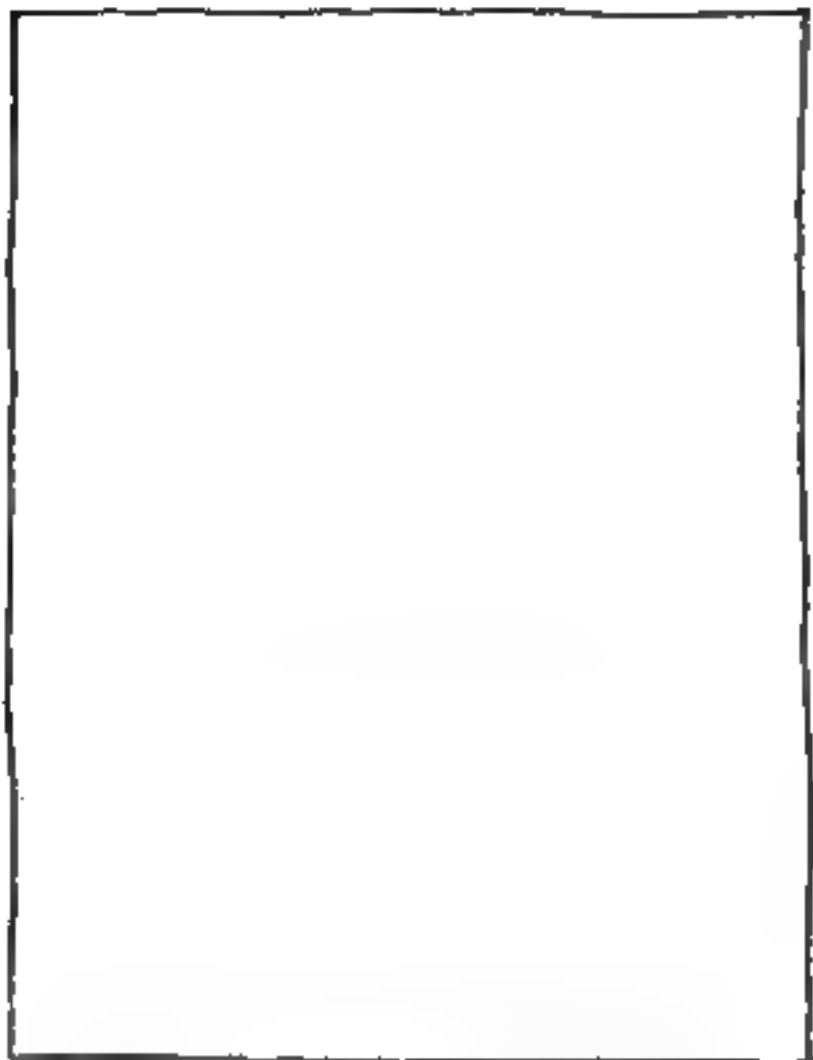
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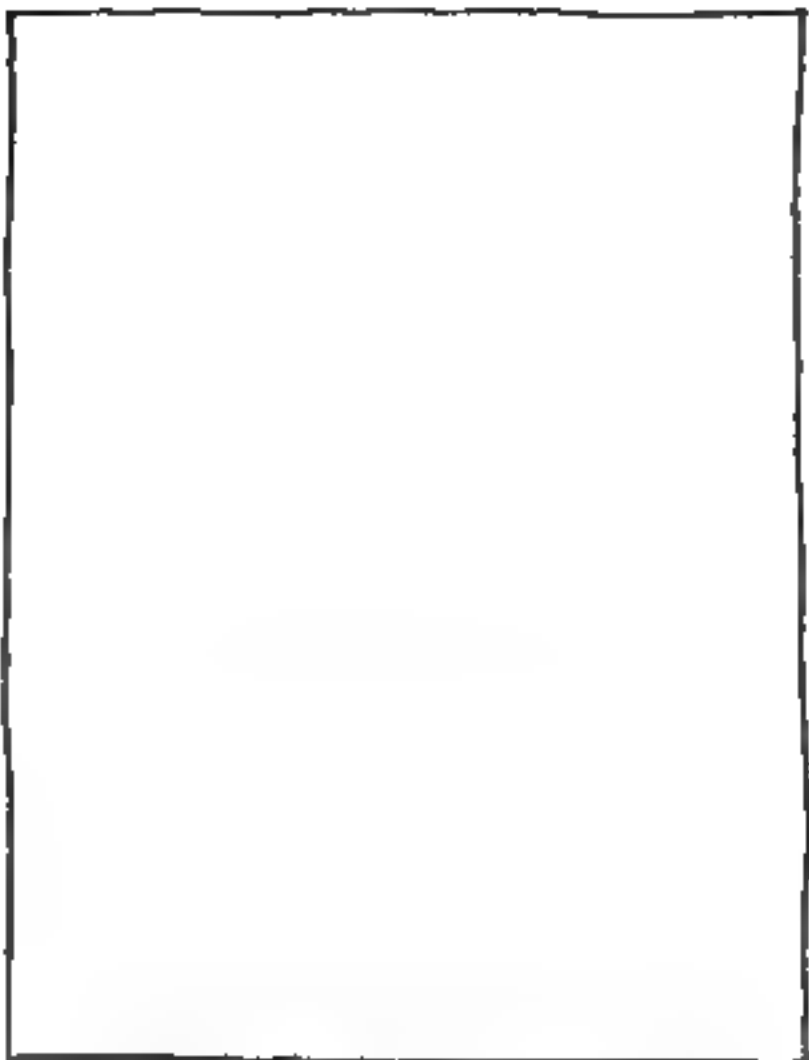
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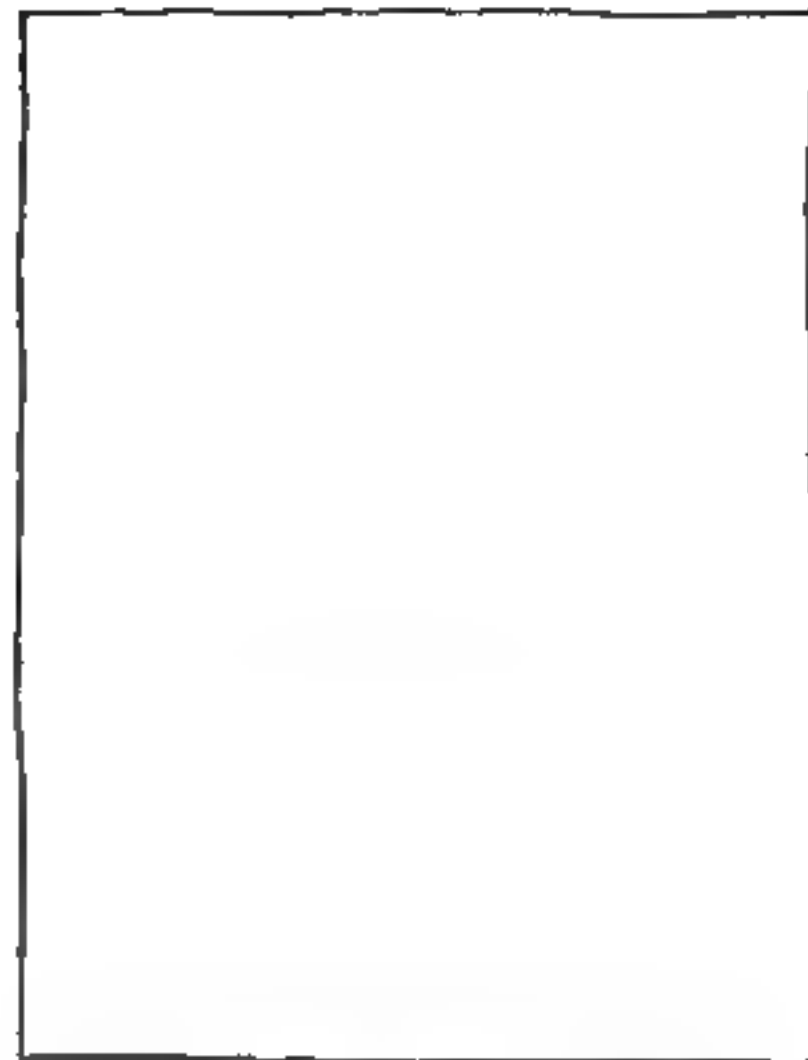
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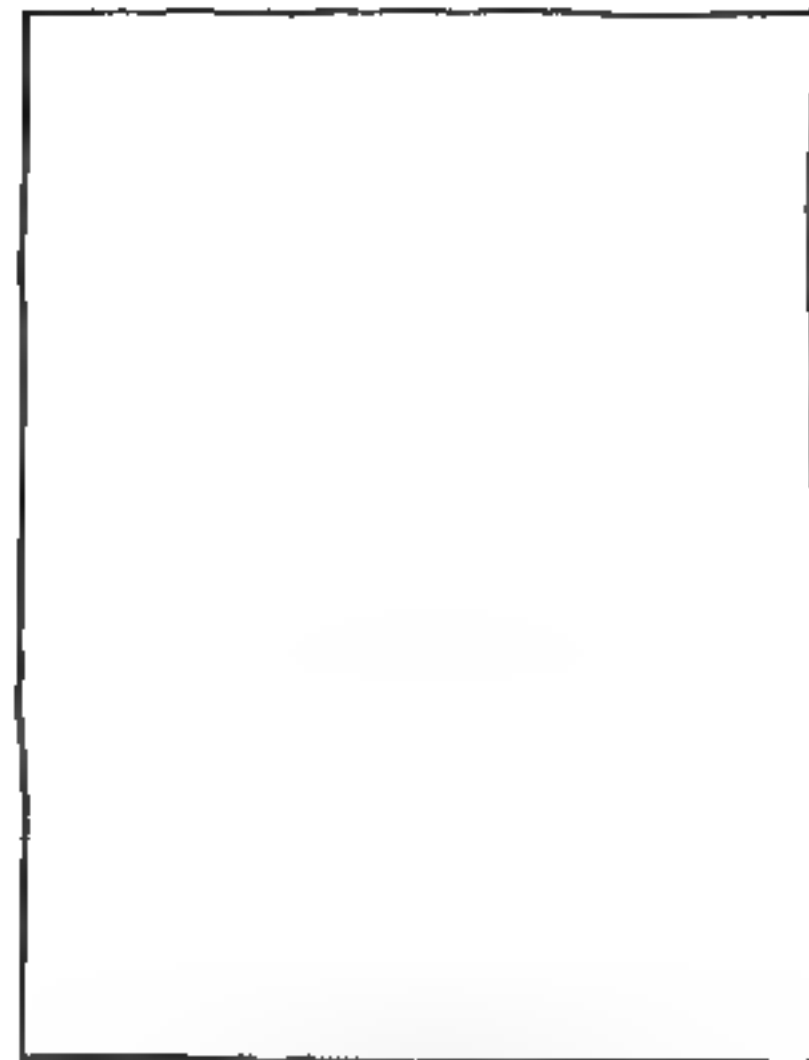
**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

relations:
ANDREW (boyfriend)



MICHONNE

status: alive
Little is currently known about Michonne.

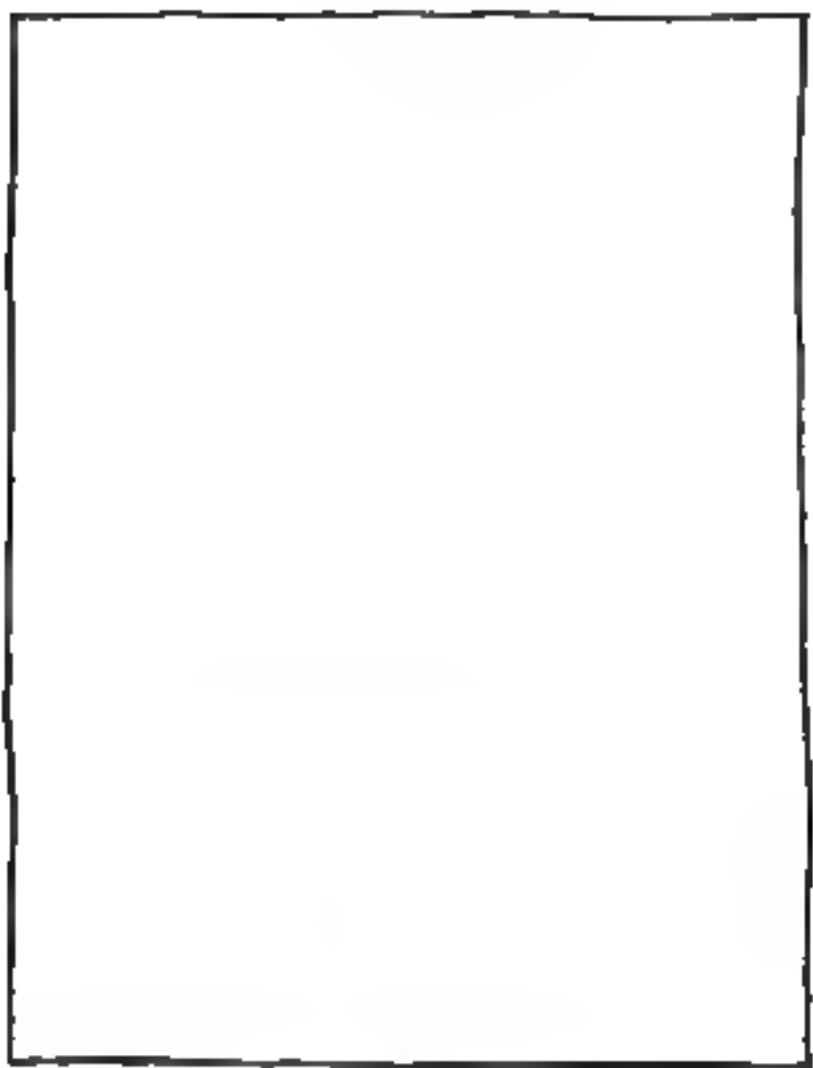
relations:
NONE



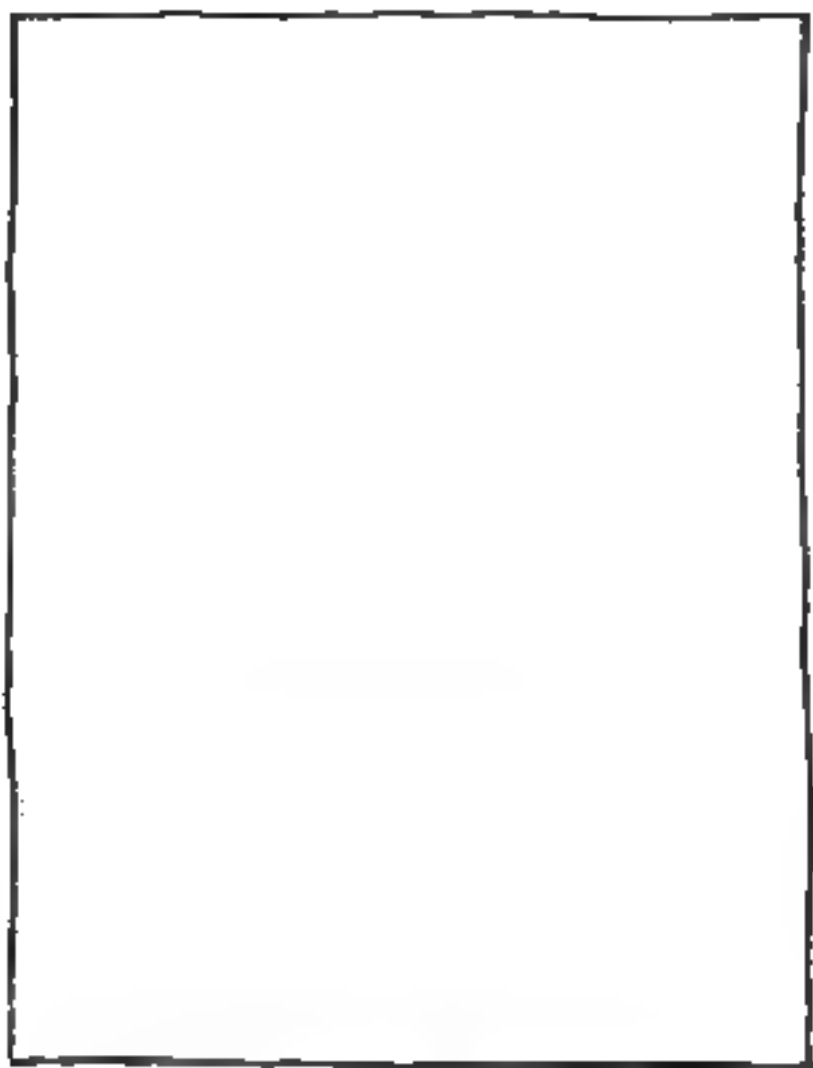
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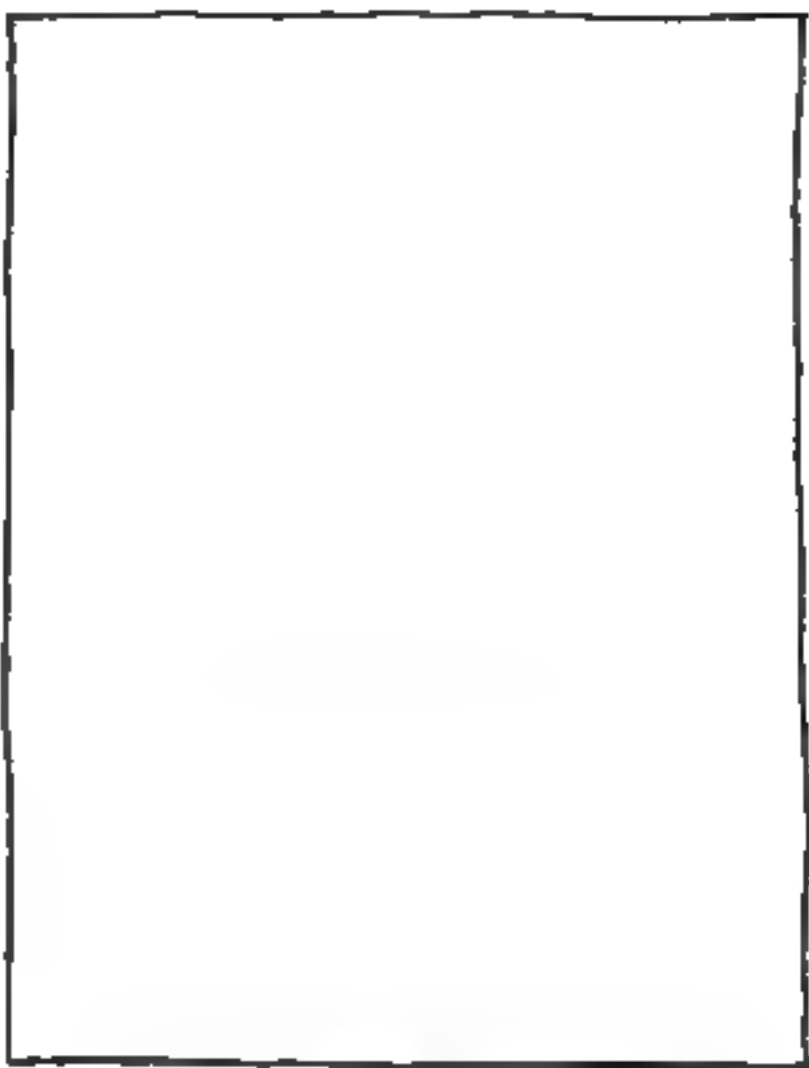
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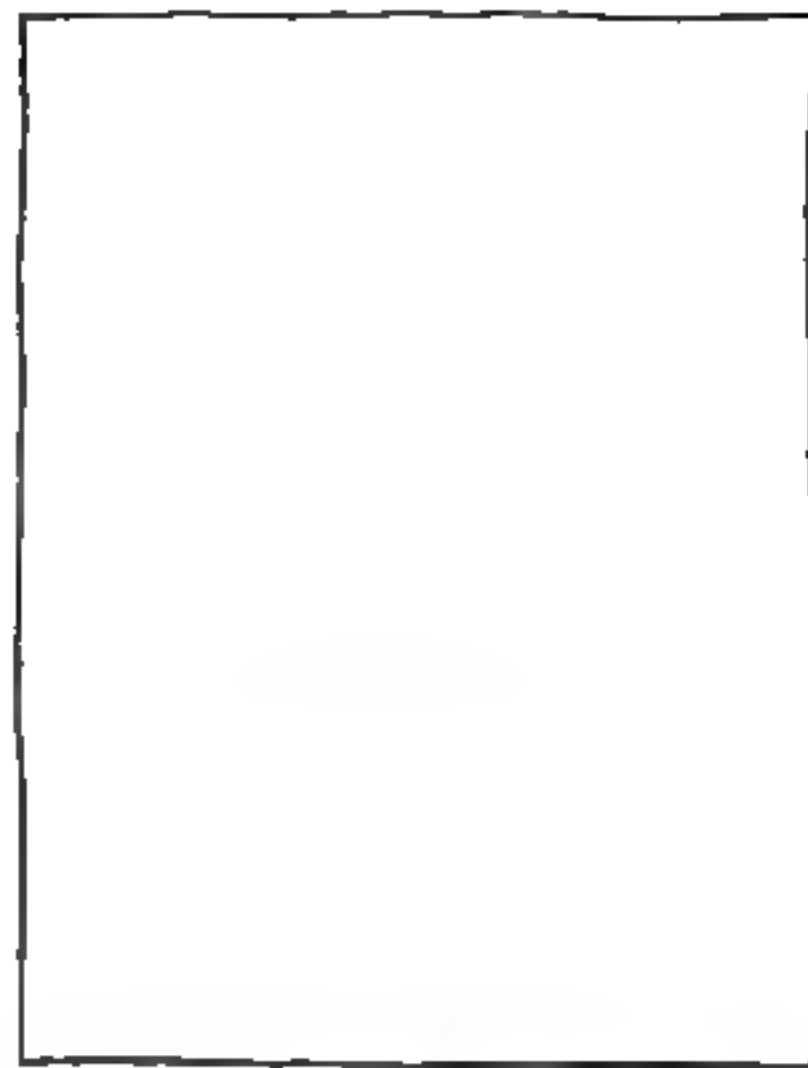
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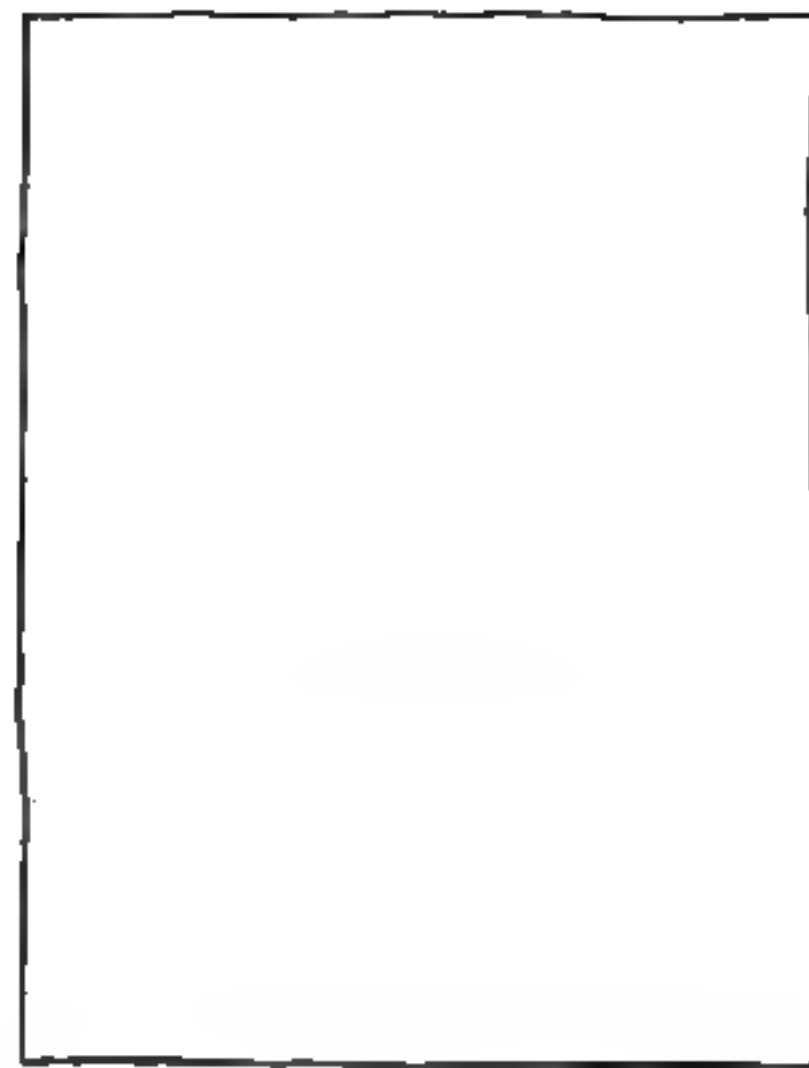
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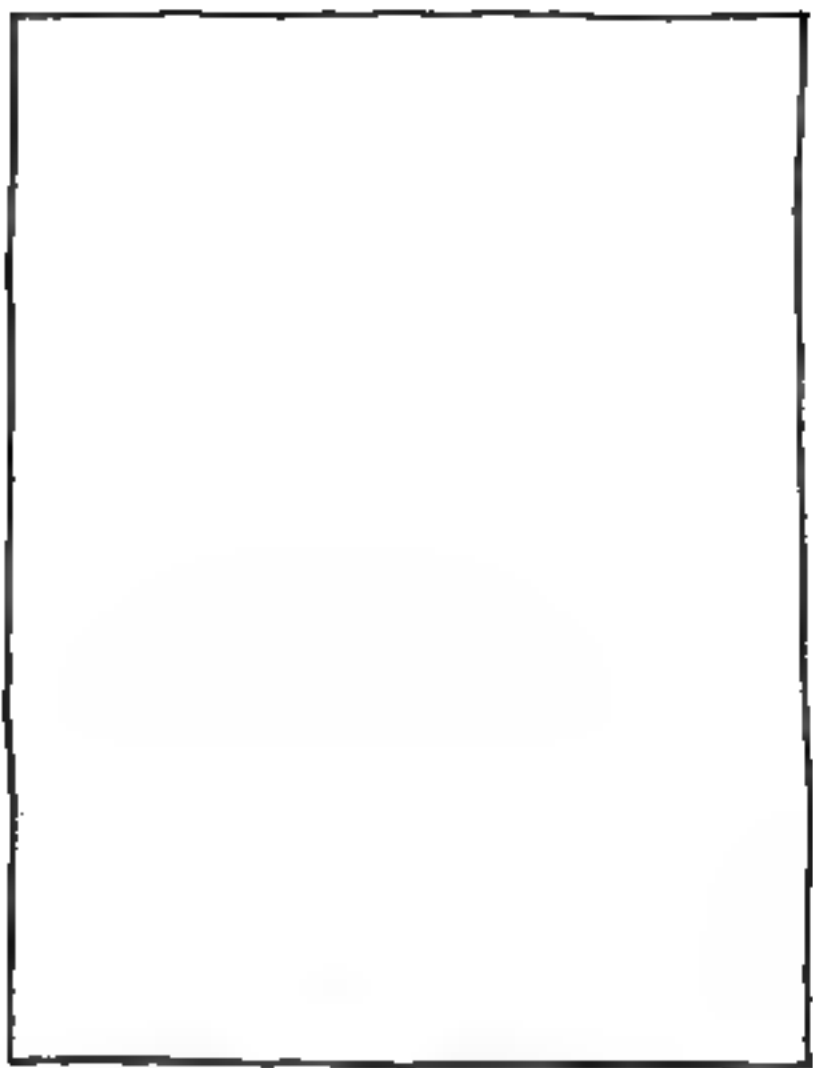
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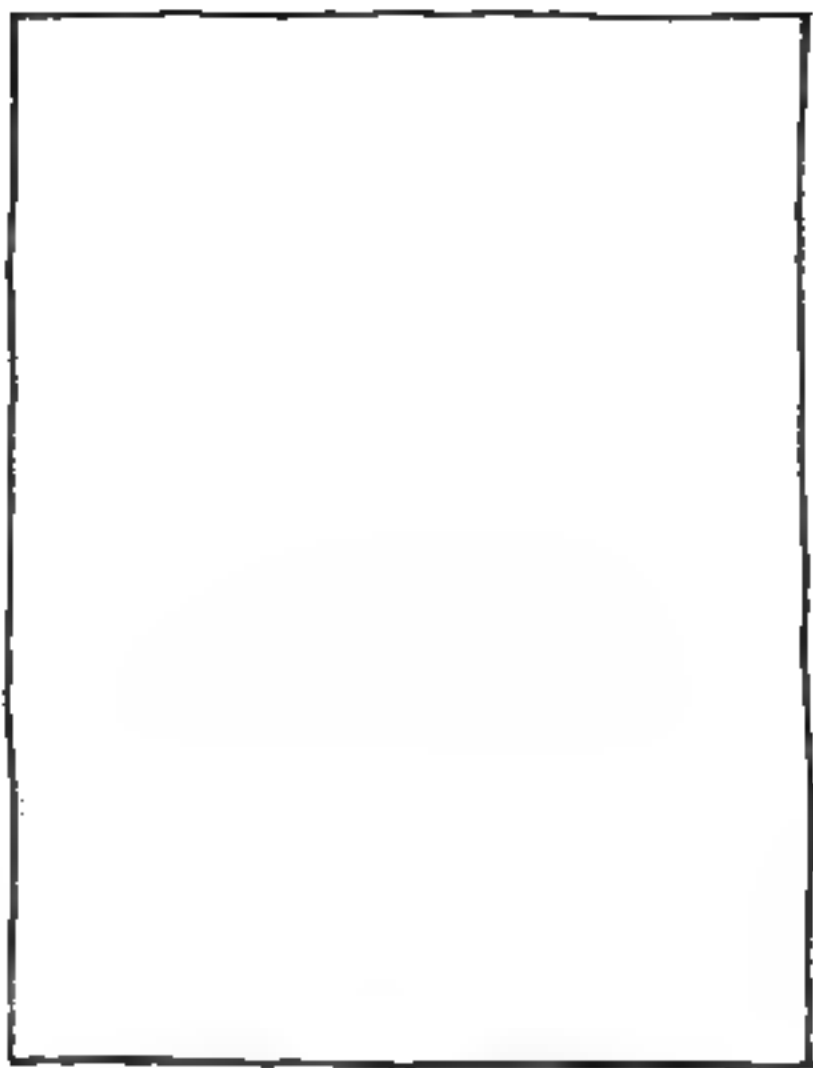
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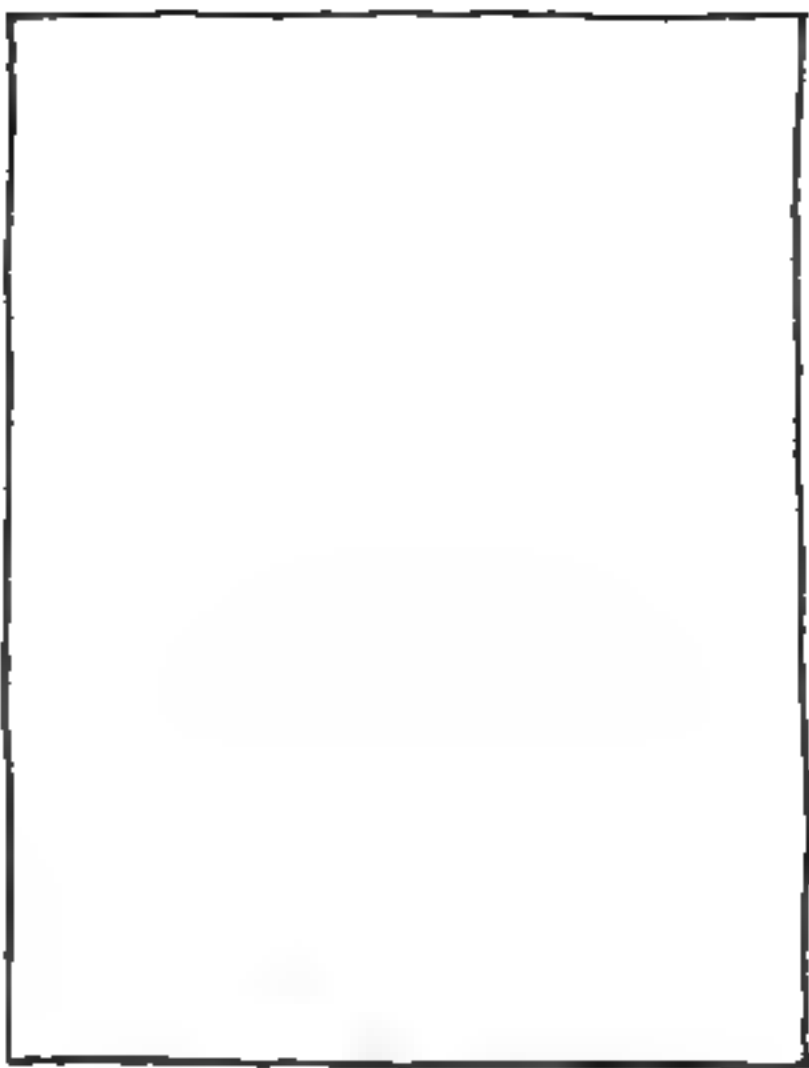
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**COMING
SOON**



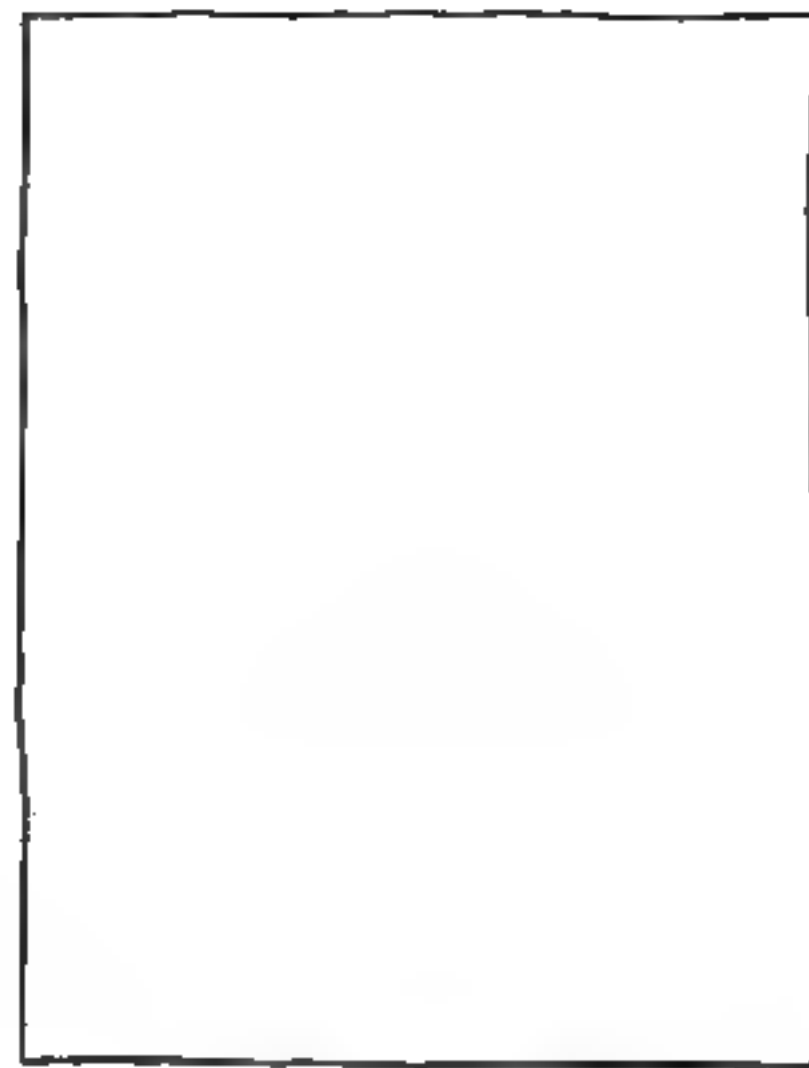
**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**



**COMING
SOON**

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

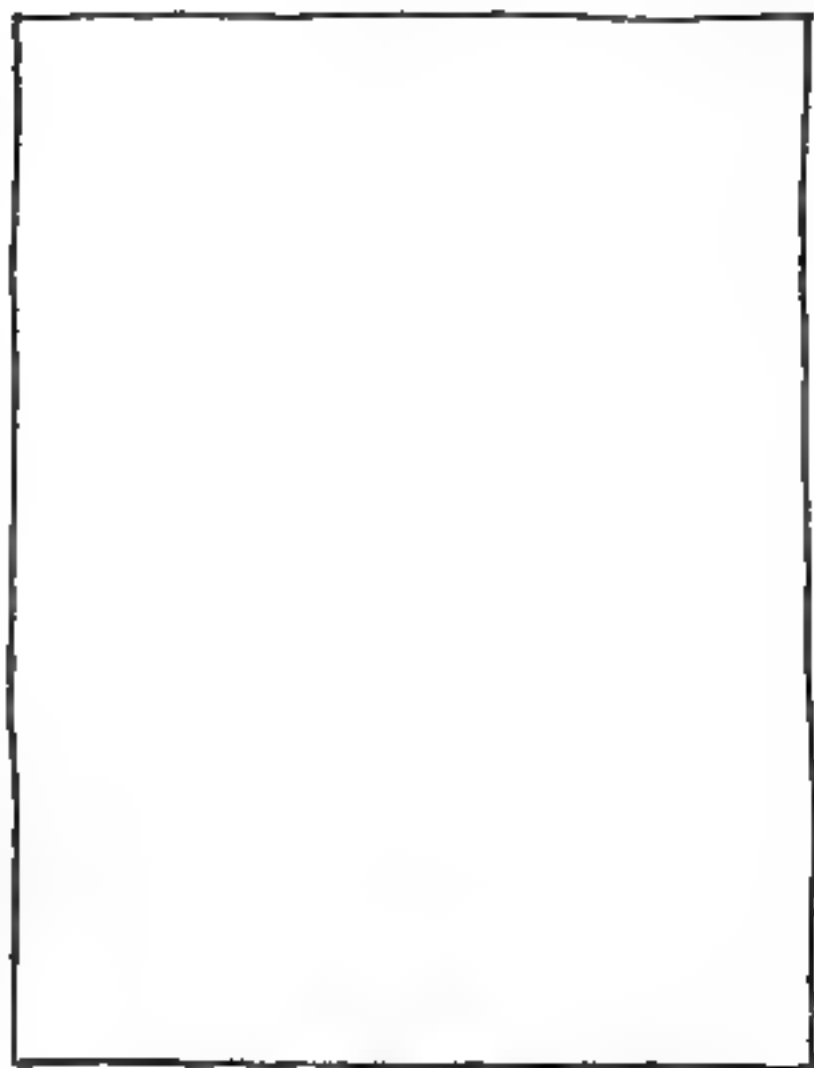
relations:
ANDREW (boyfriend)



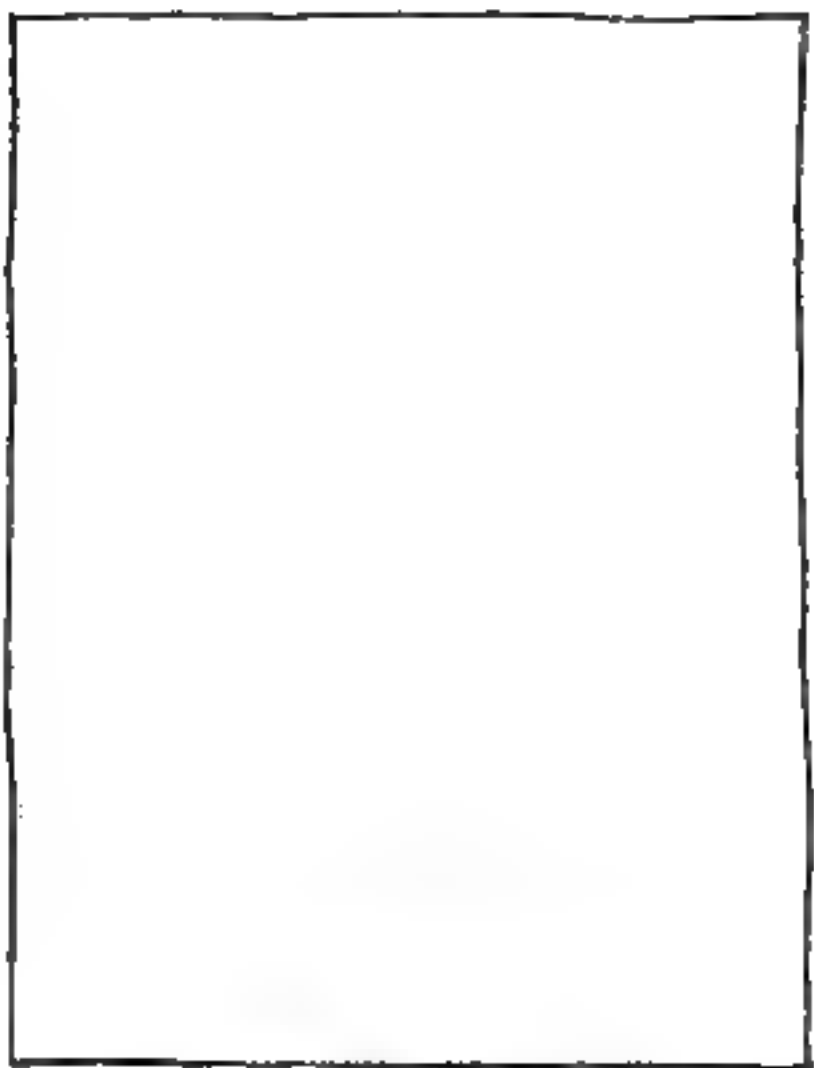
MICHONNE

status: alive
Little is currently known about Michonne.

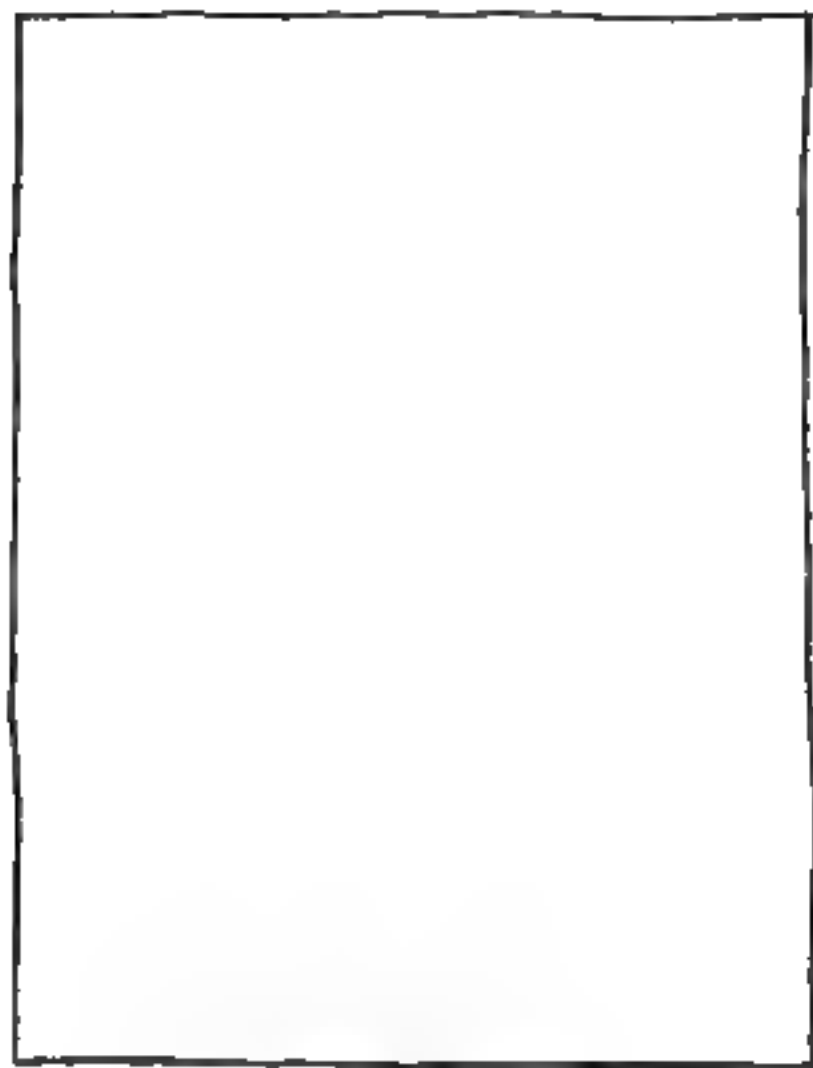
relations:
NONE



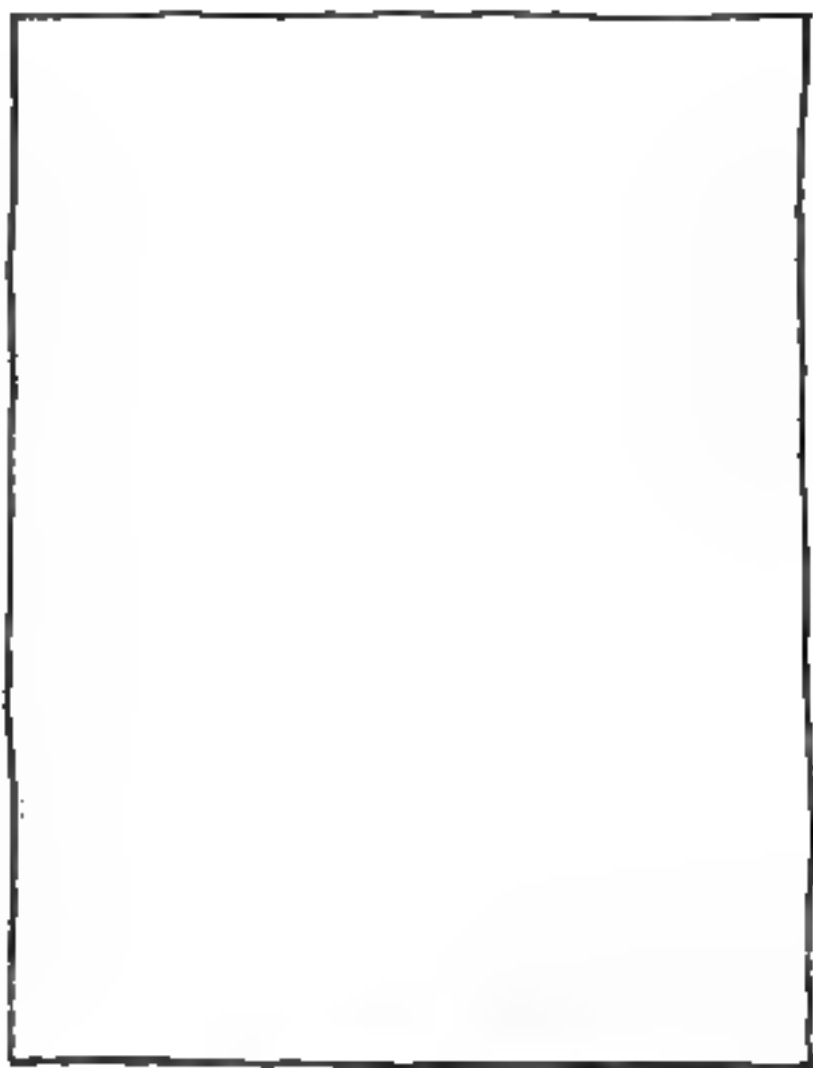
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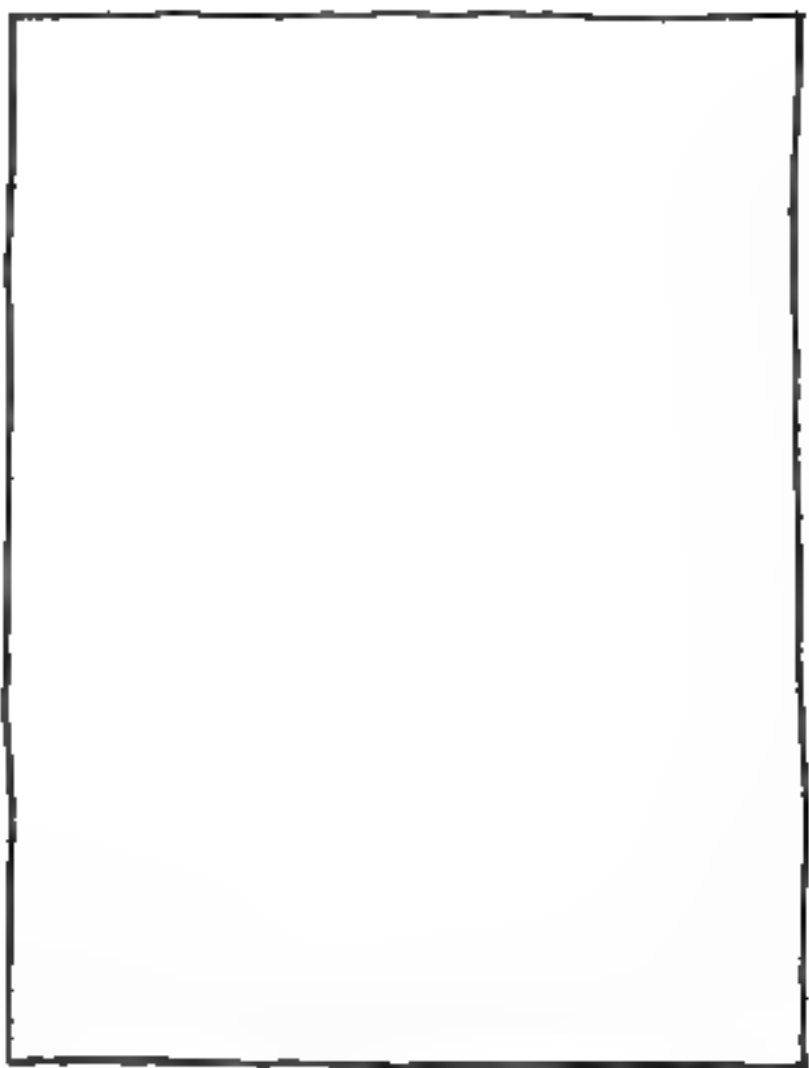
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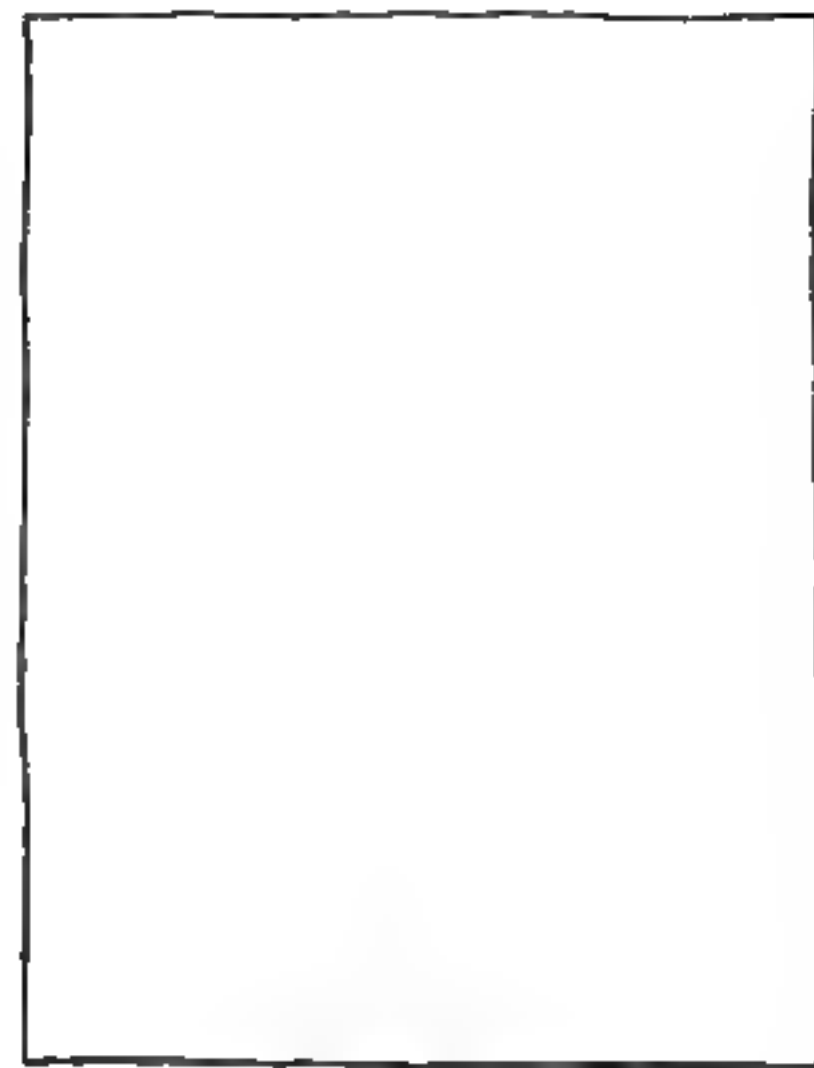
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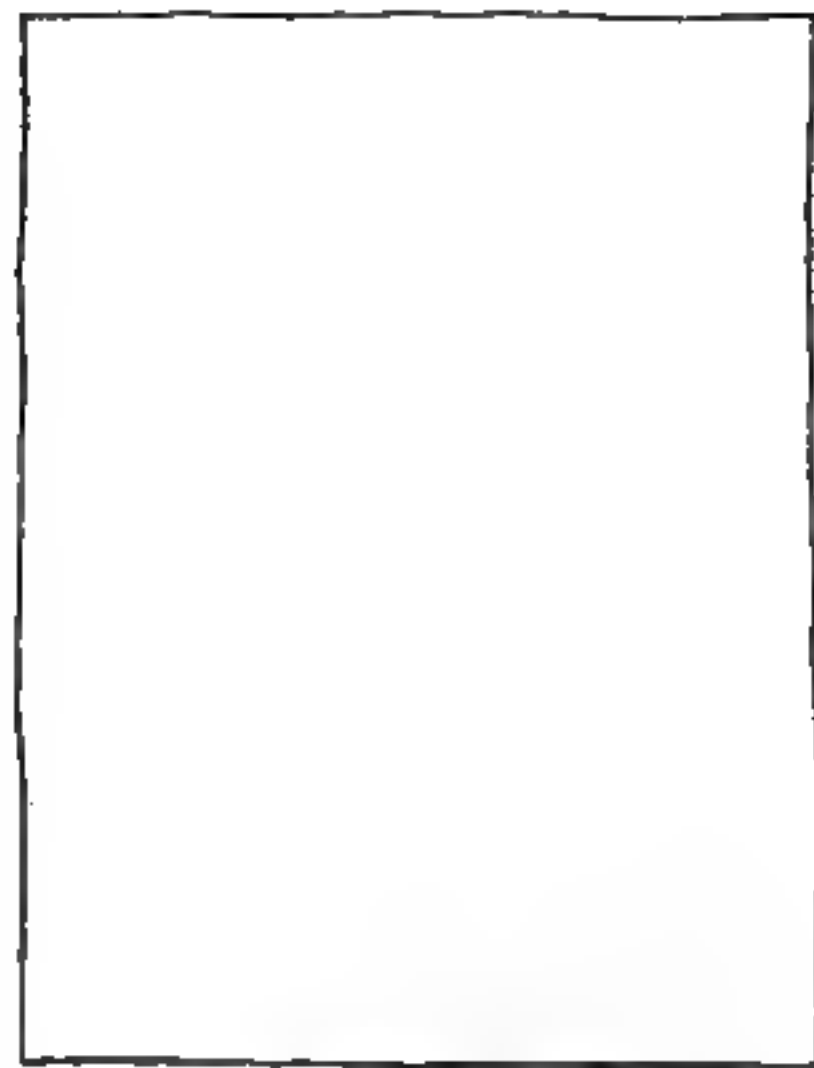
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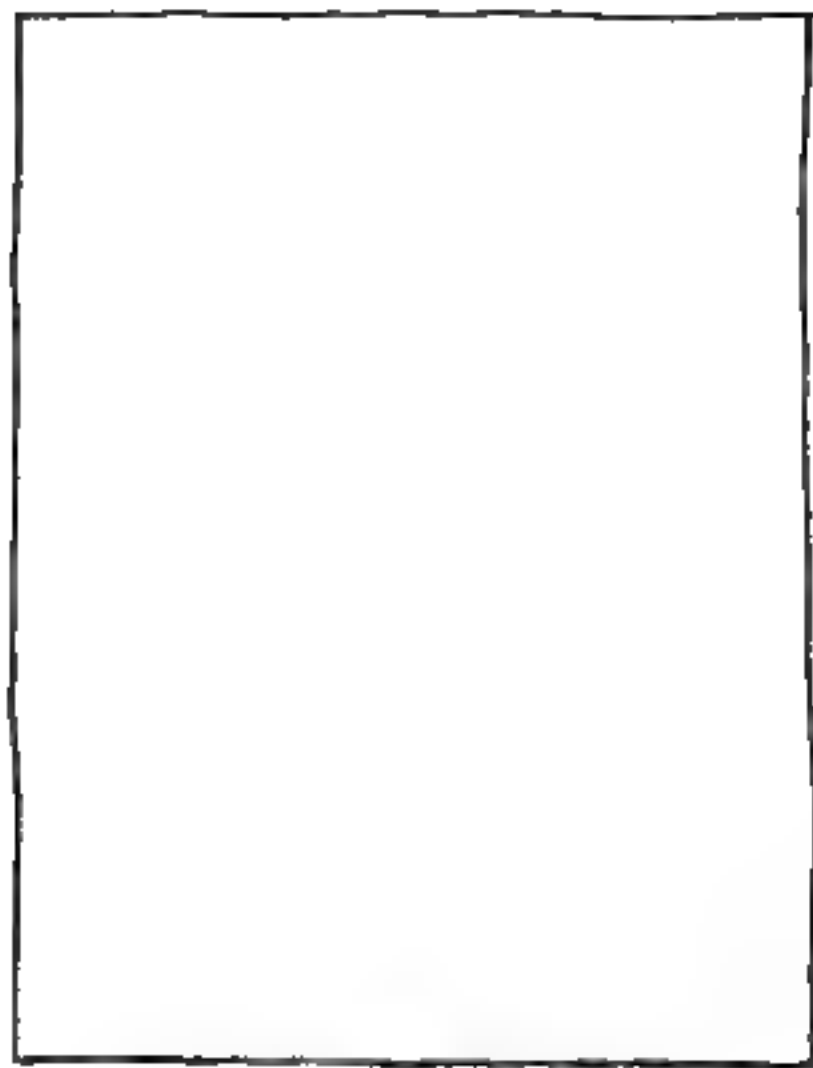
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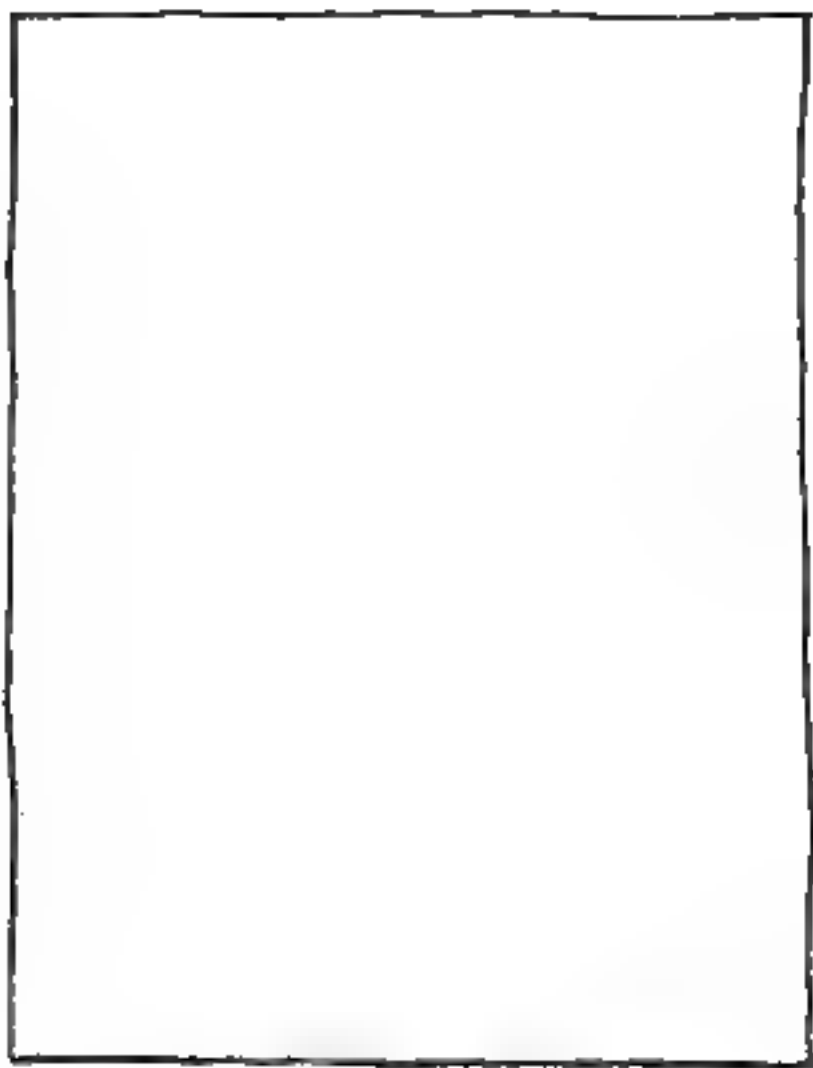
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SOON**



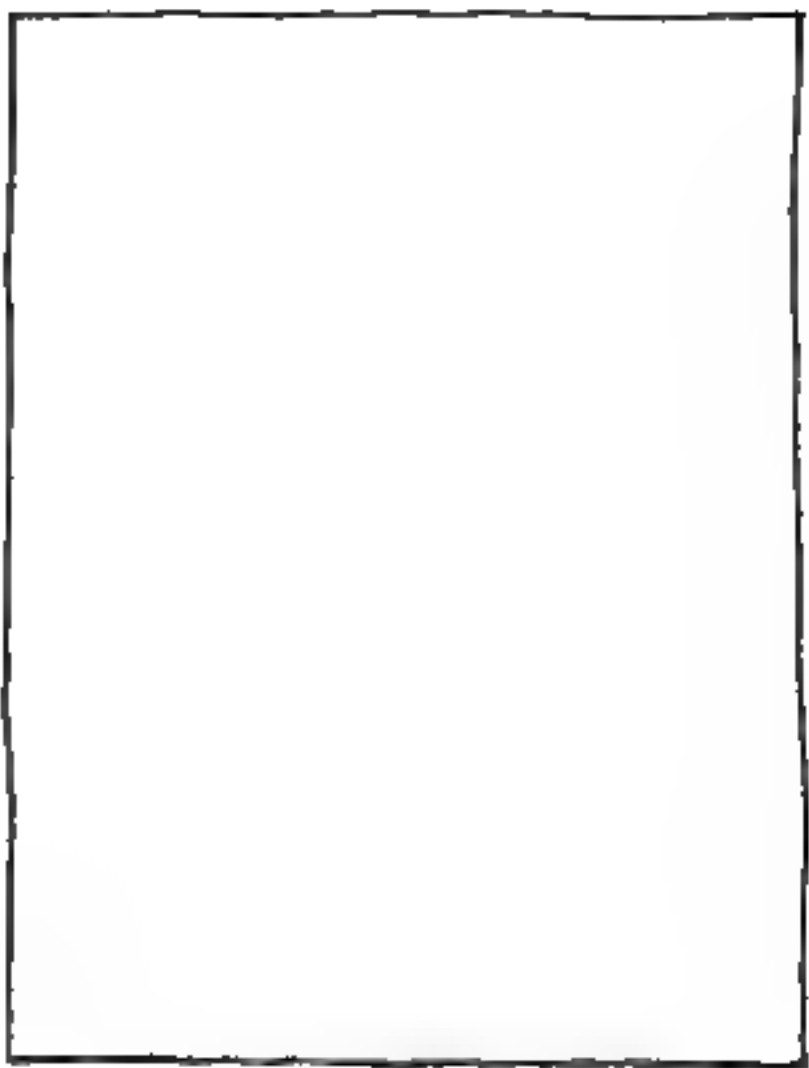
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SOON**



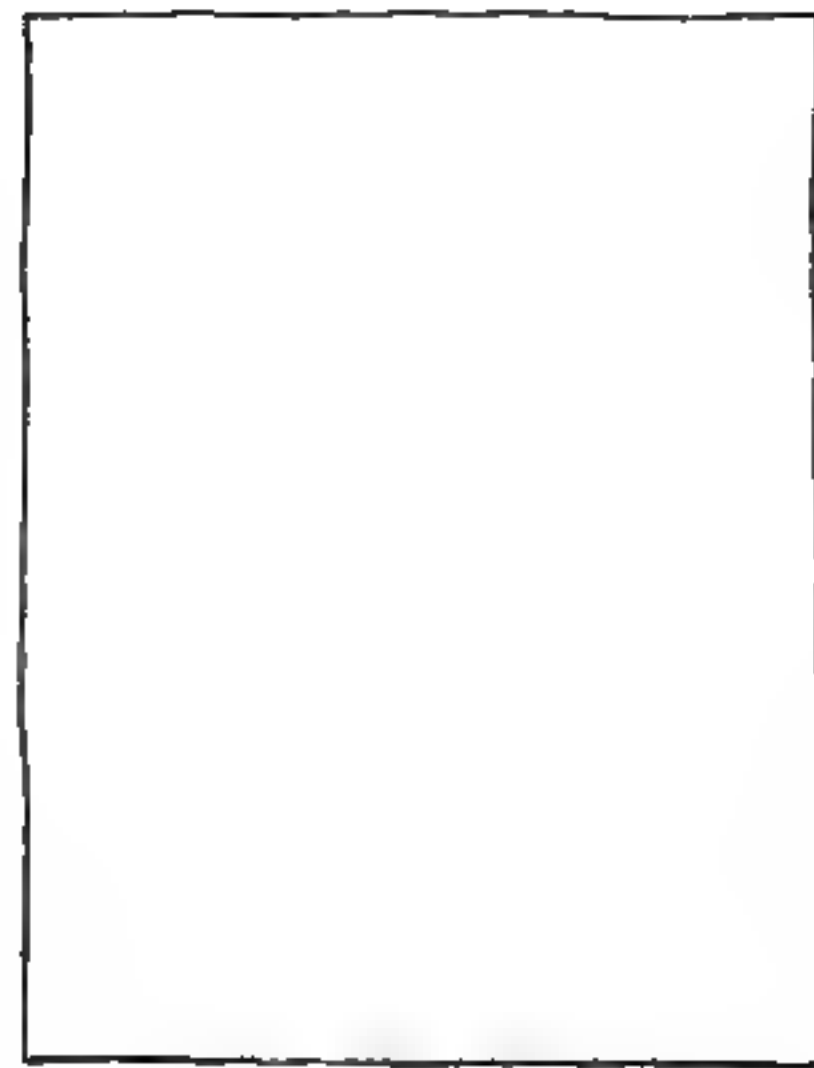
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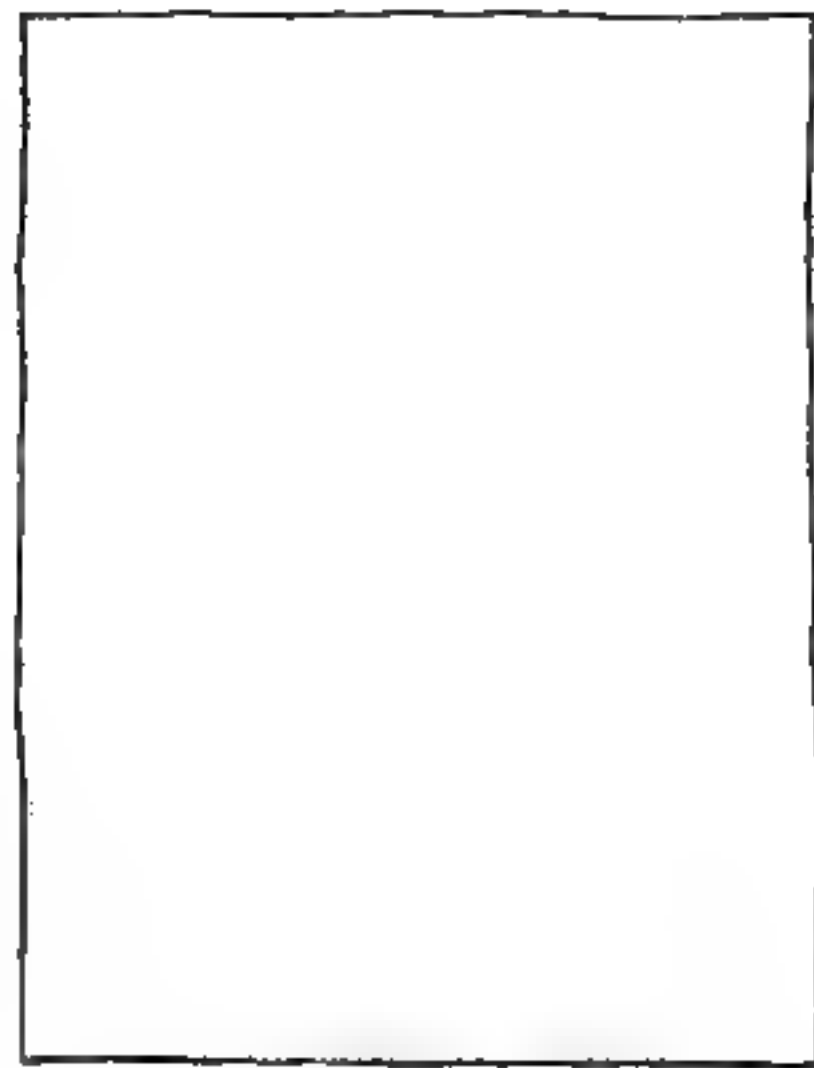
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SOON**



**COMING
SOON**

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

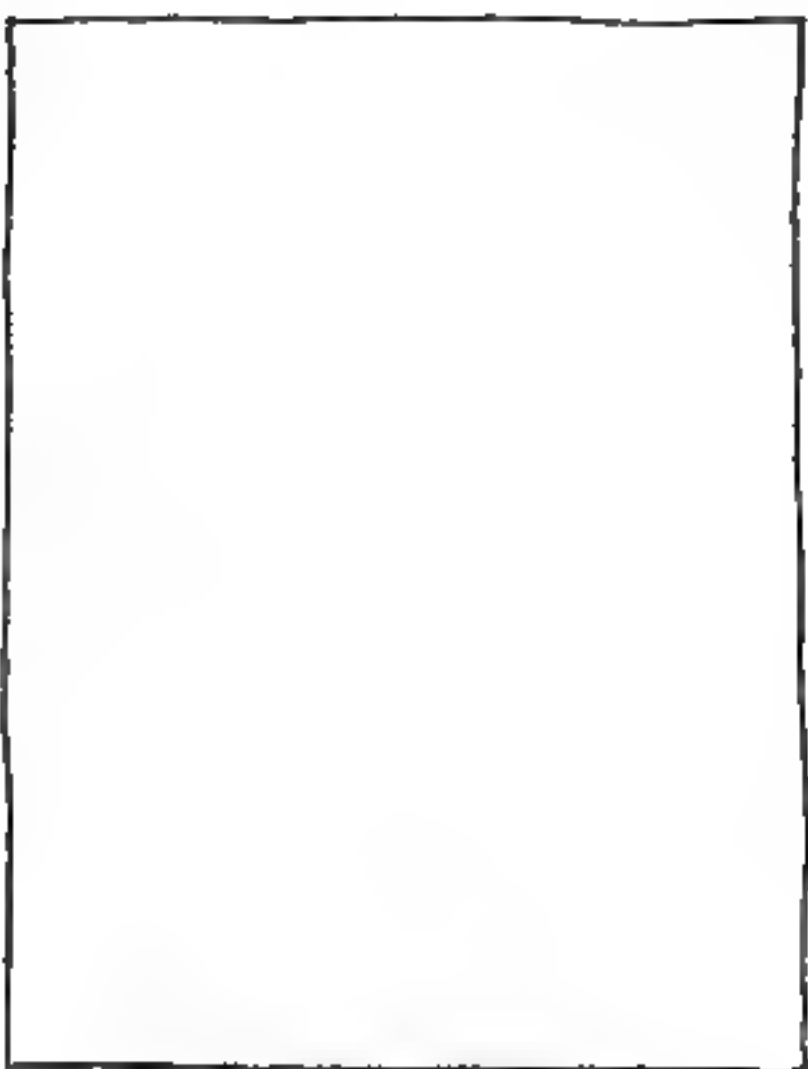
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ANDREW (boyfriend)



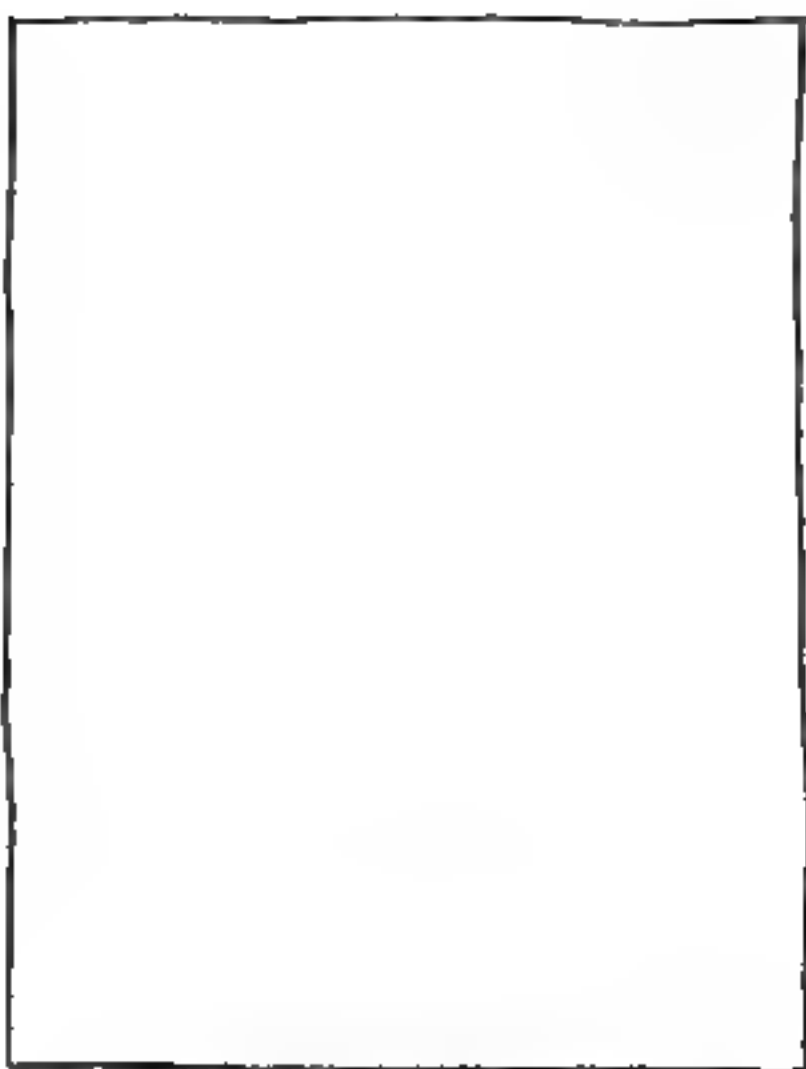
MICHONNE

status: alive
Little is currently known about Michonne.

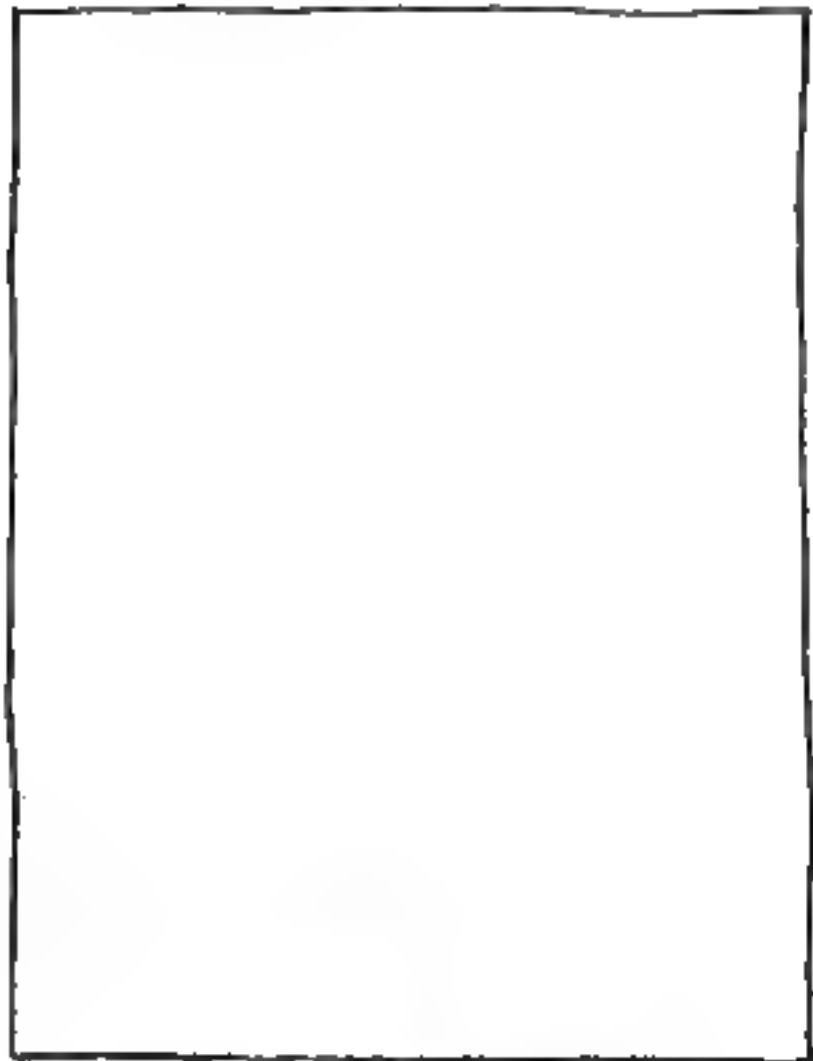
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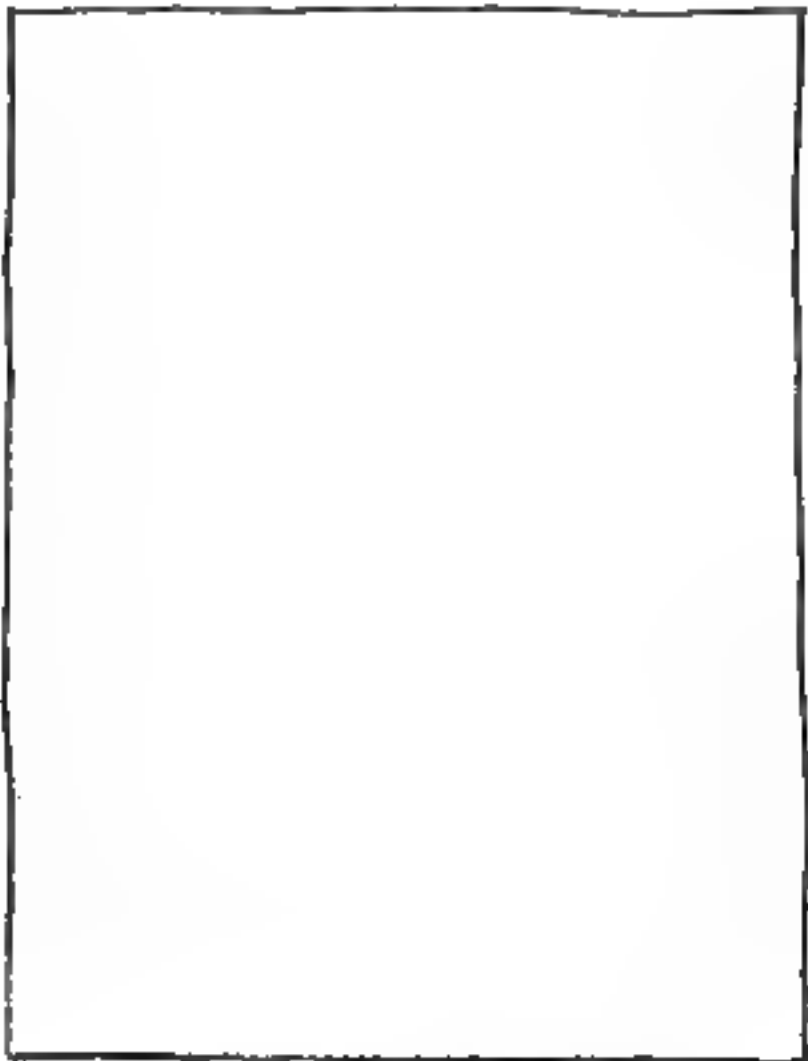
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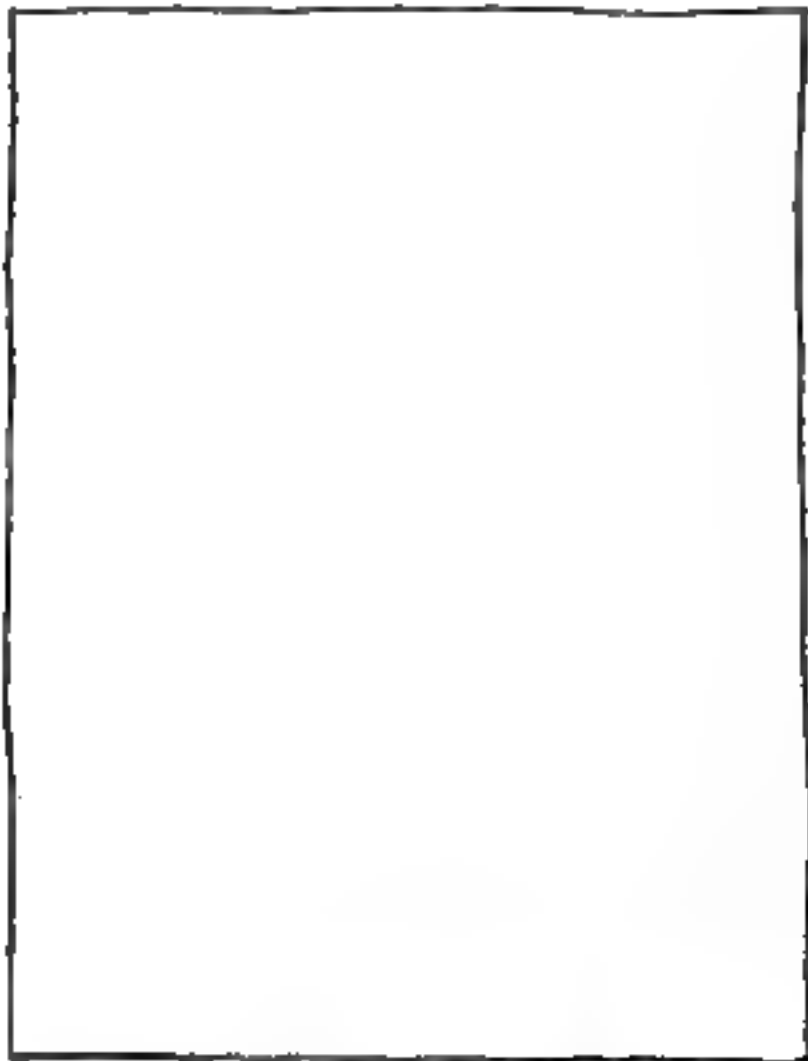
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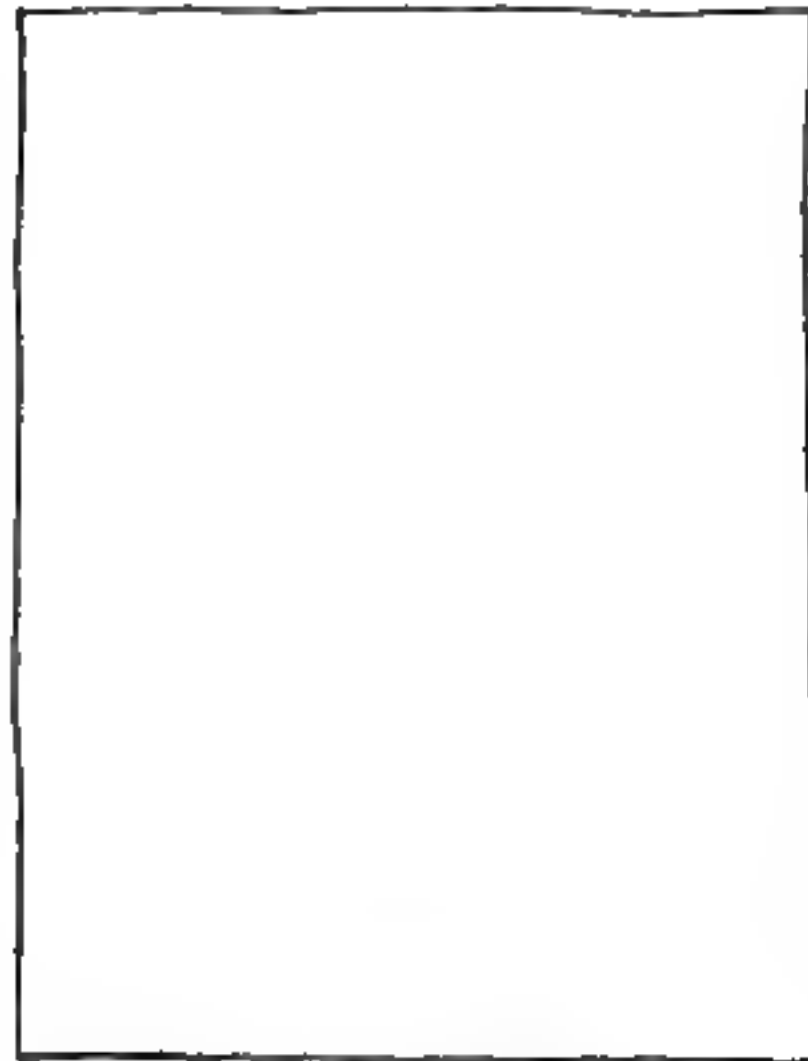
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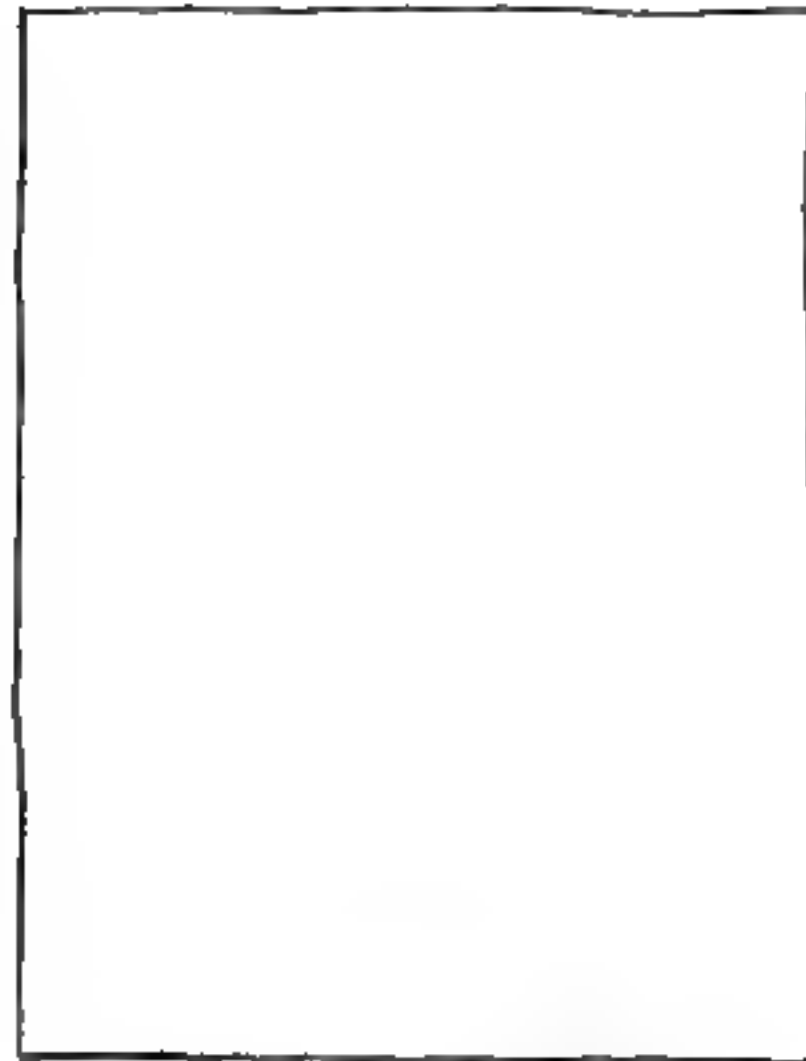
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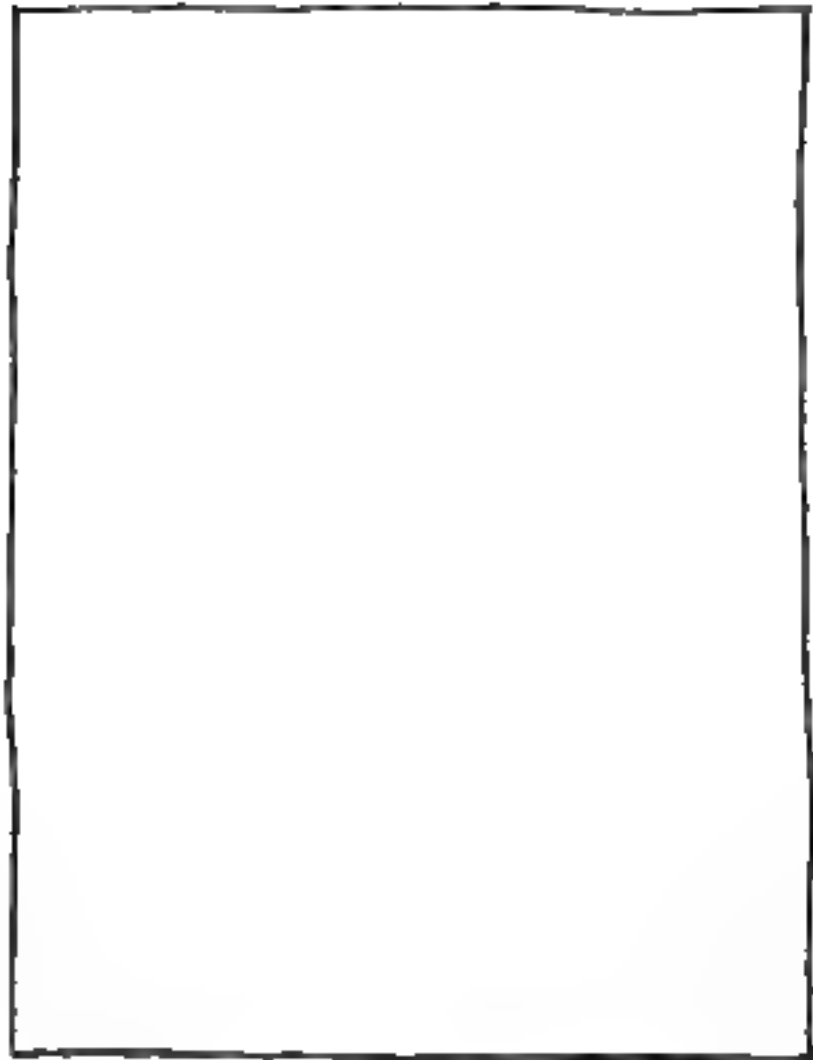
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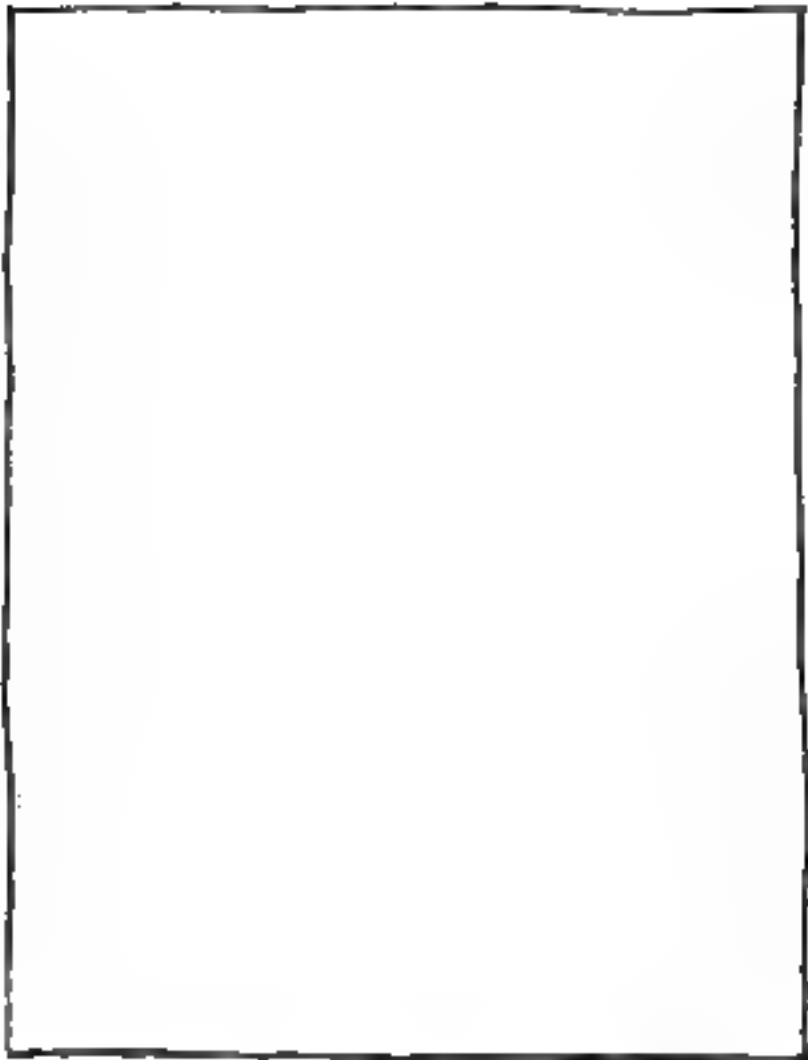
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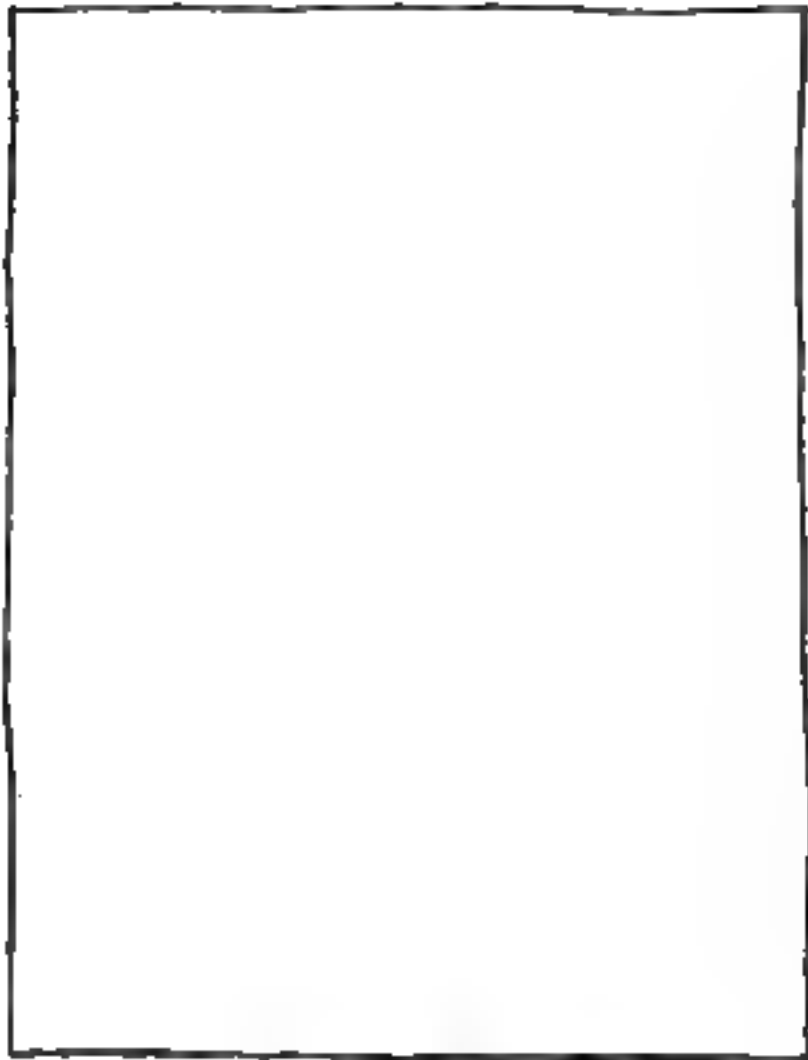
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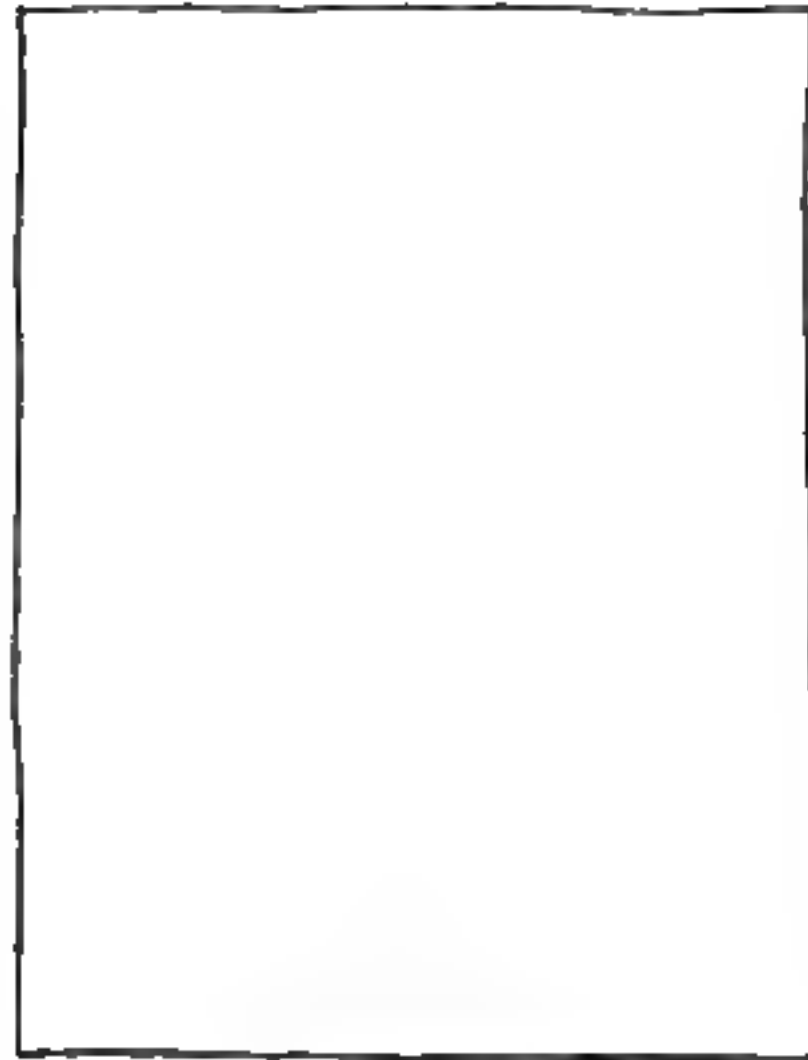
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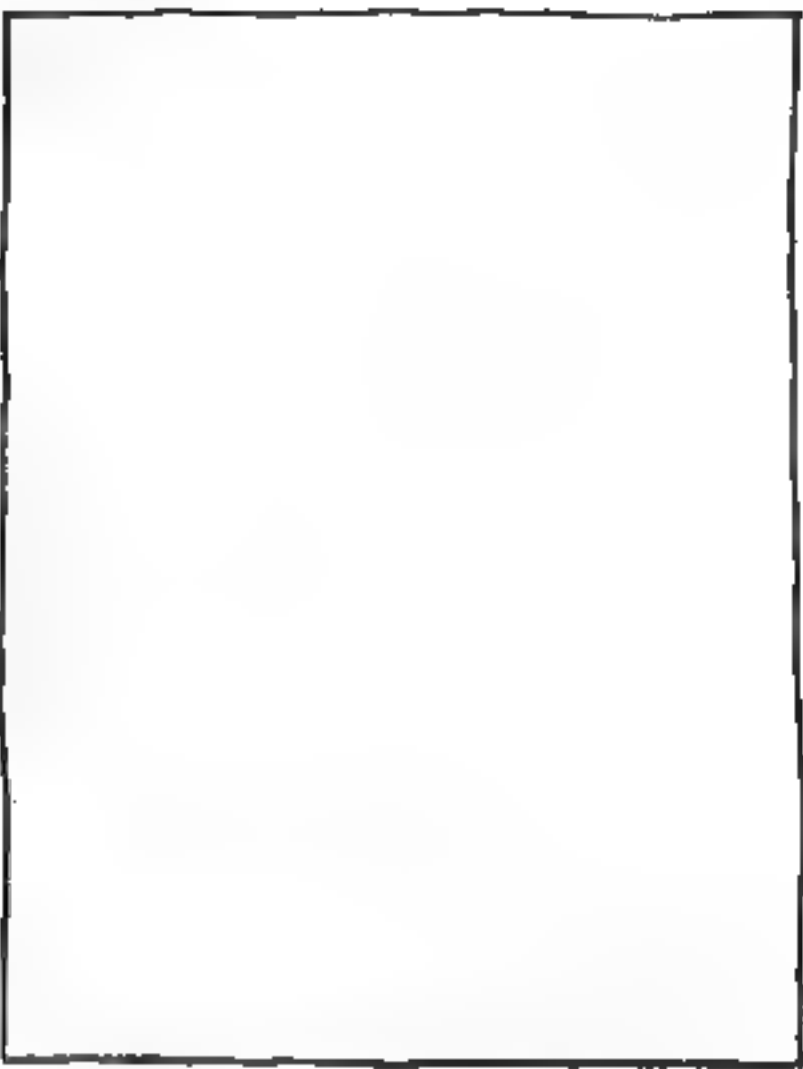
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ANDREW (boyfriend)



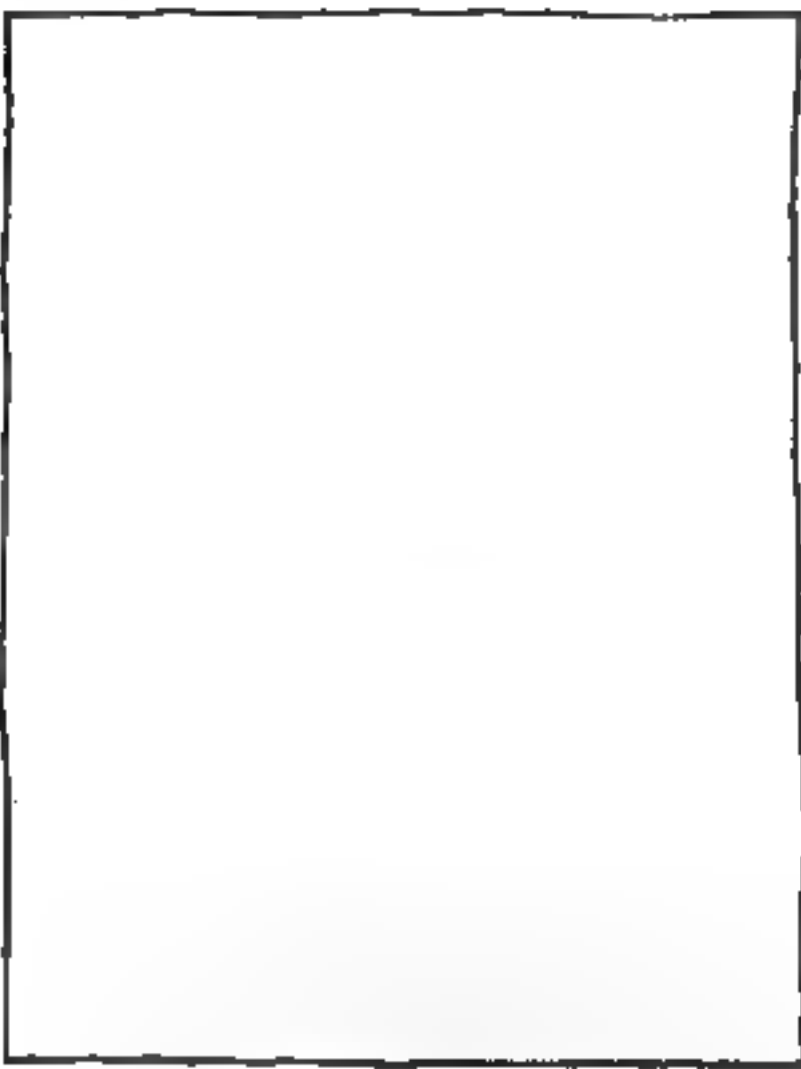
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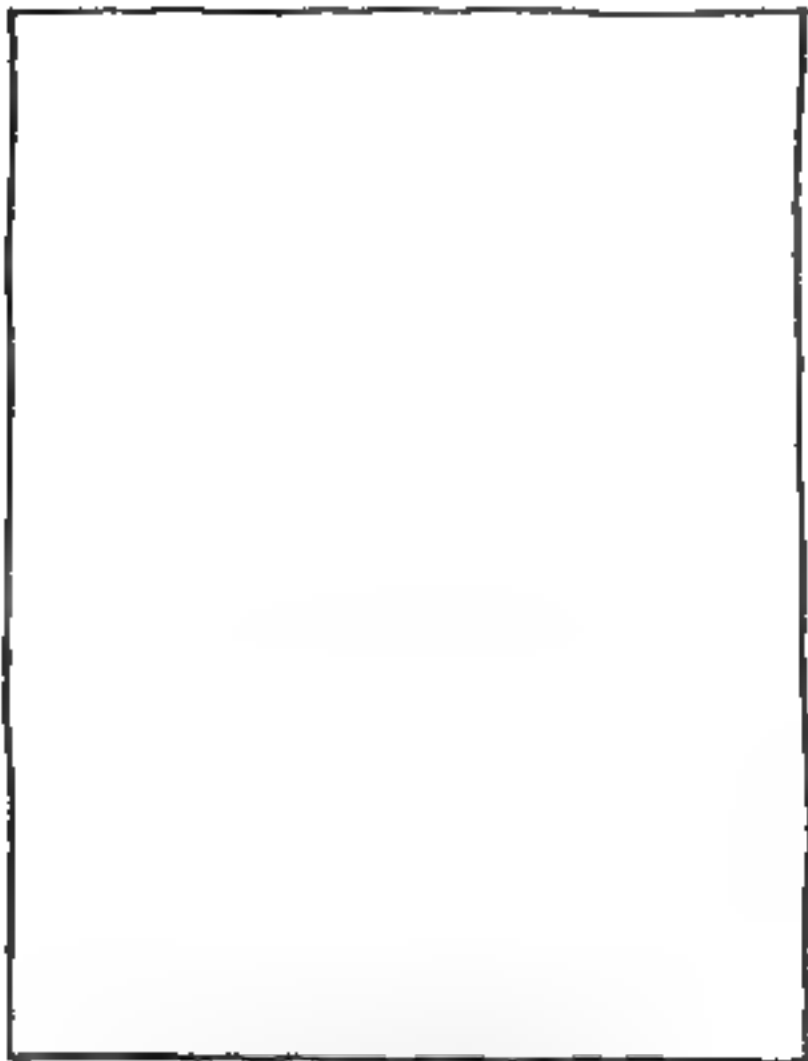
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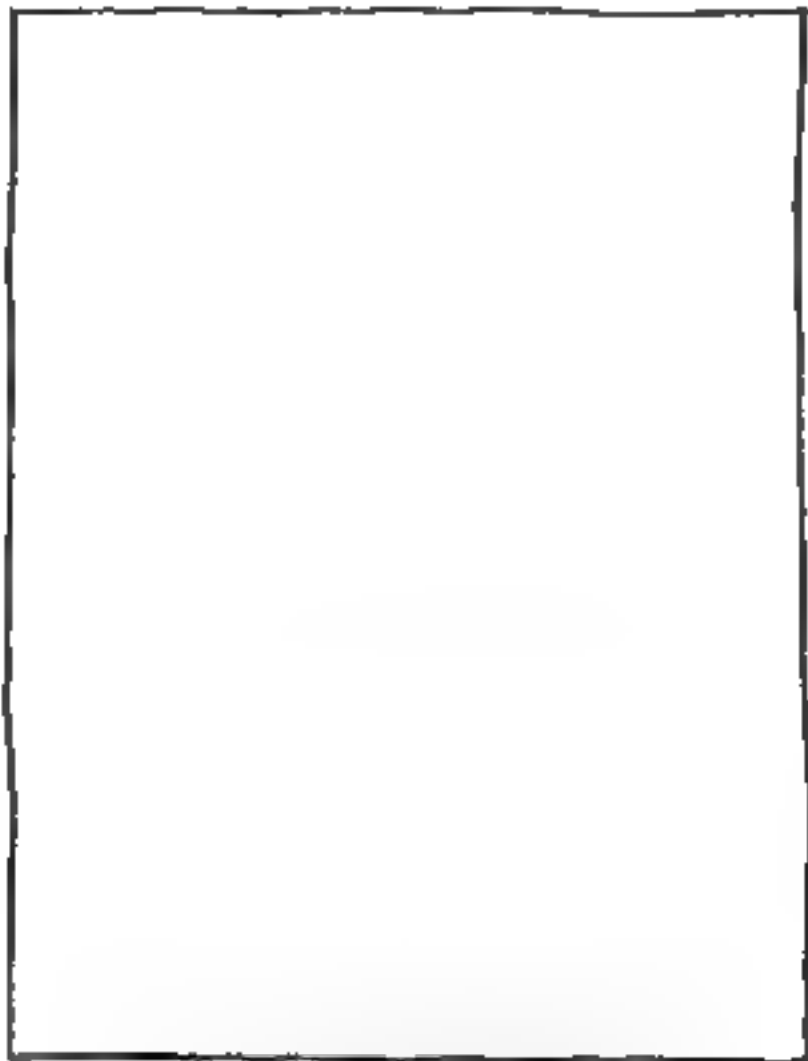
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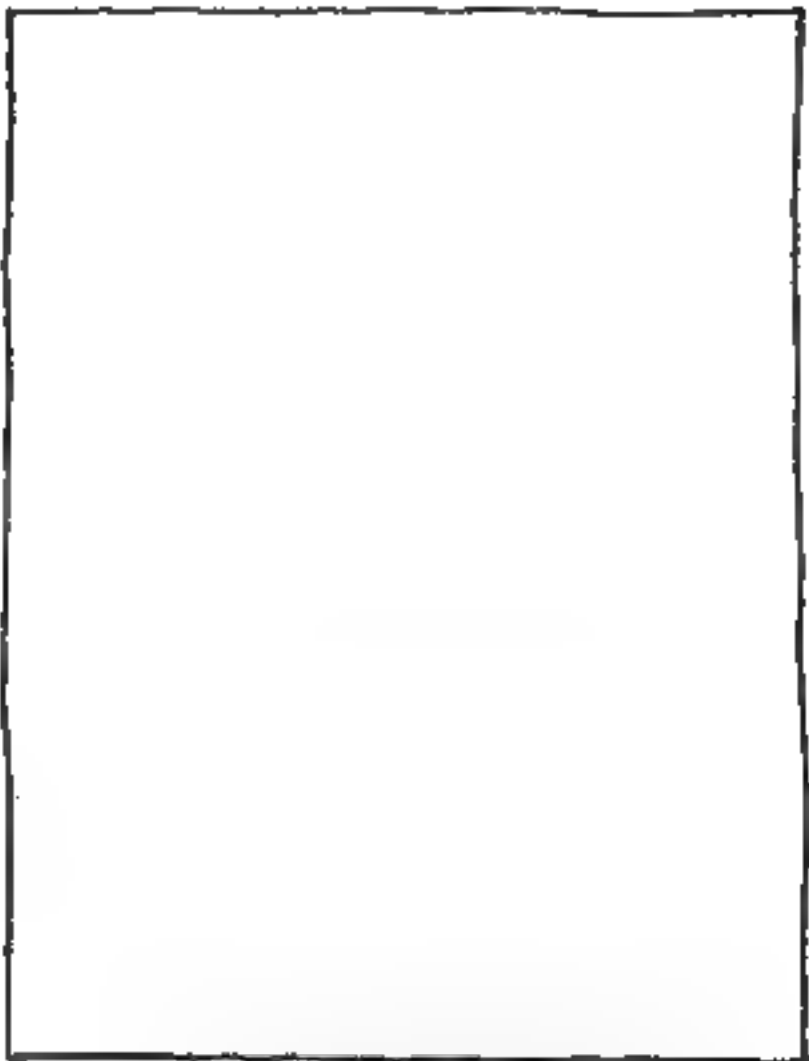
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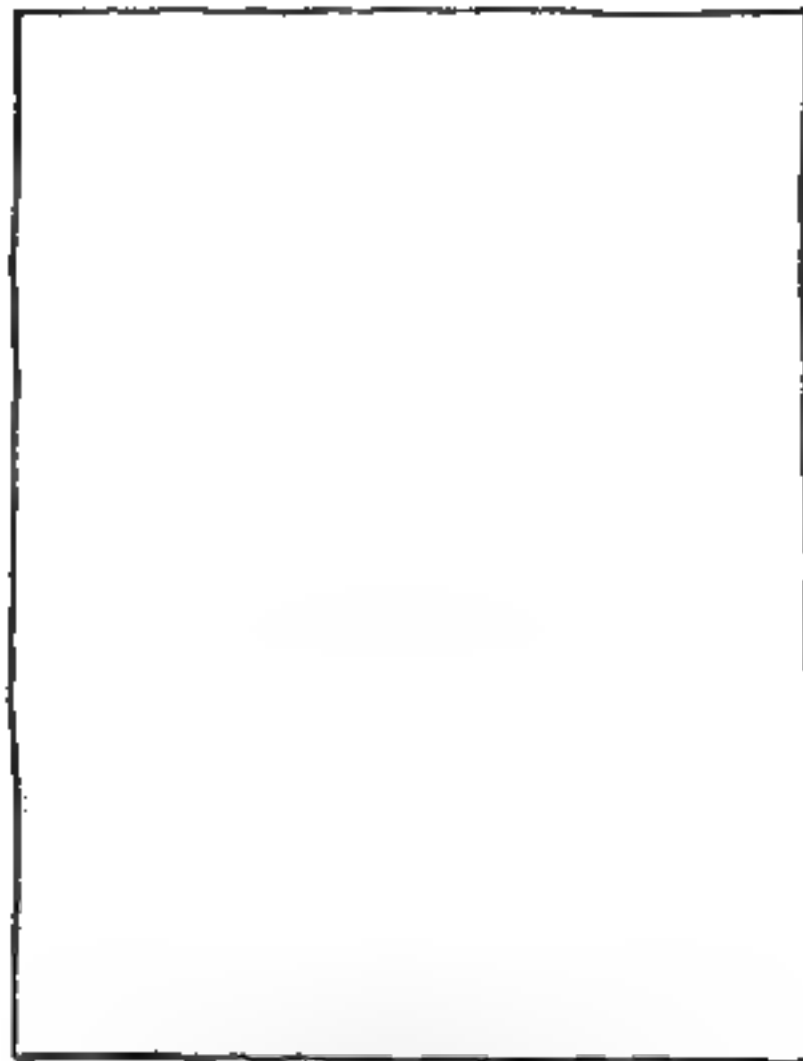
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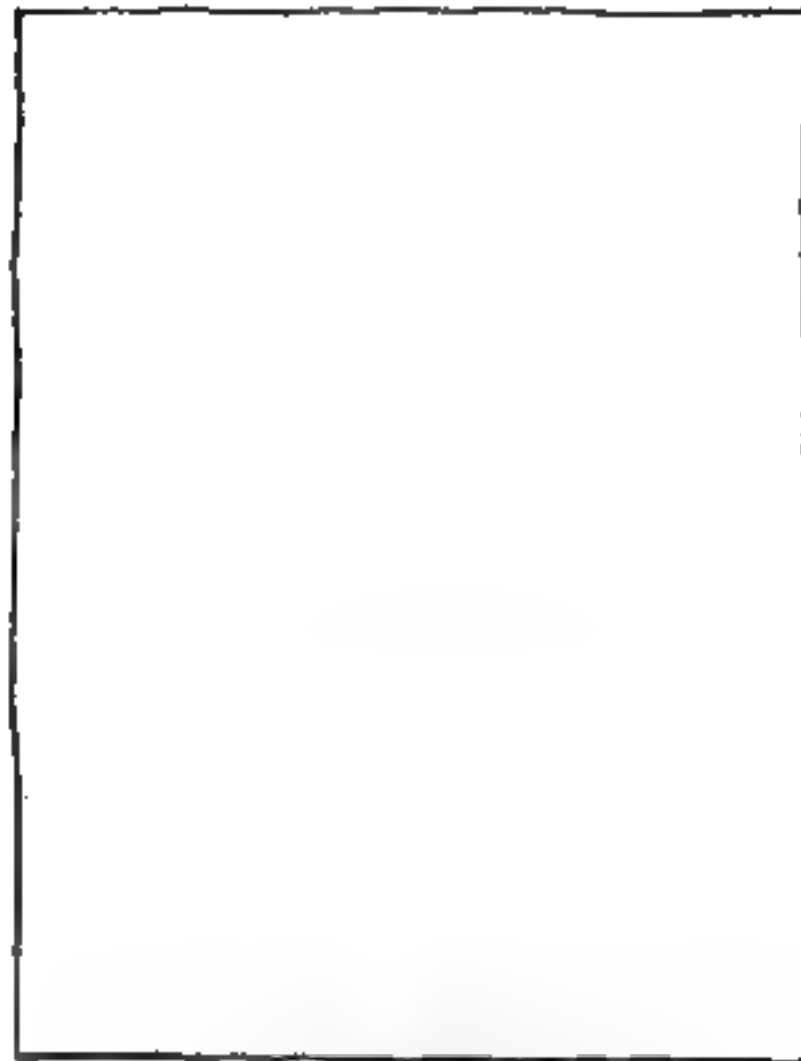
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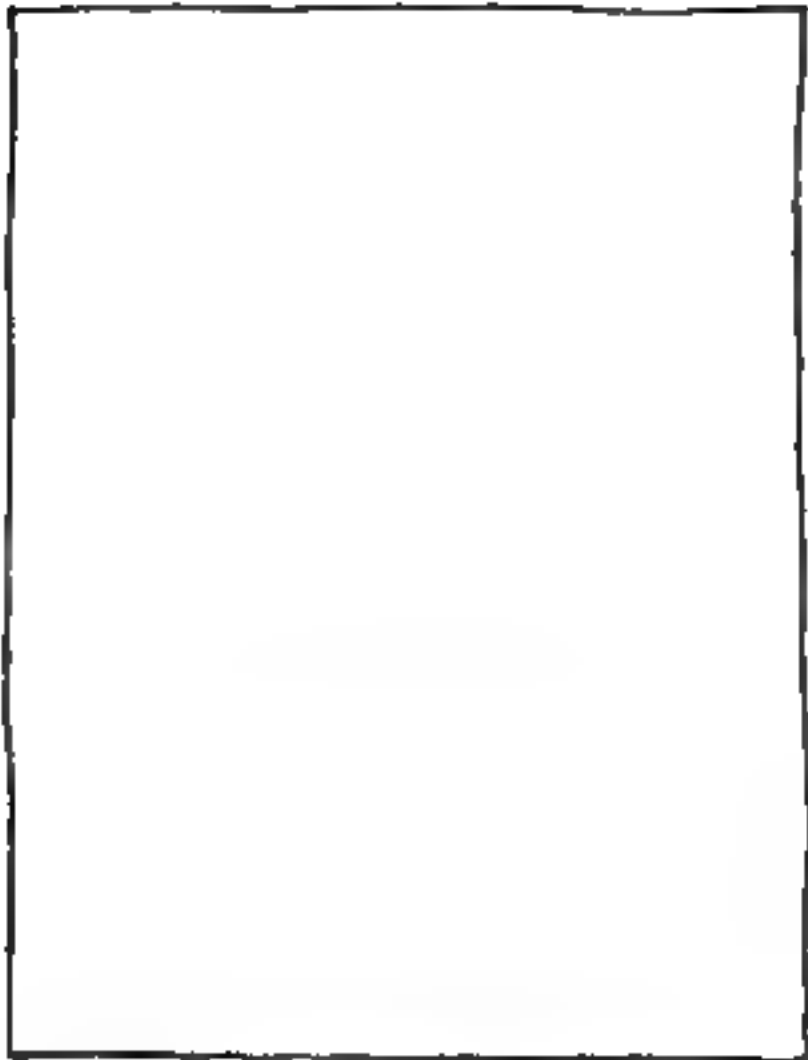
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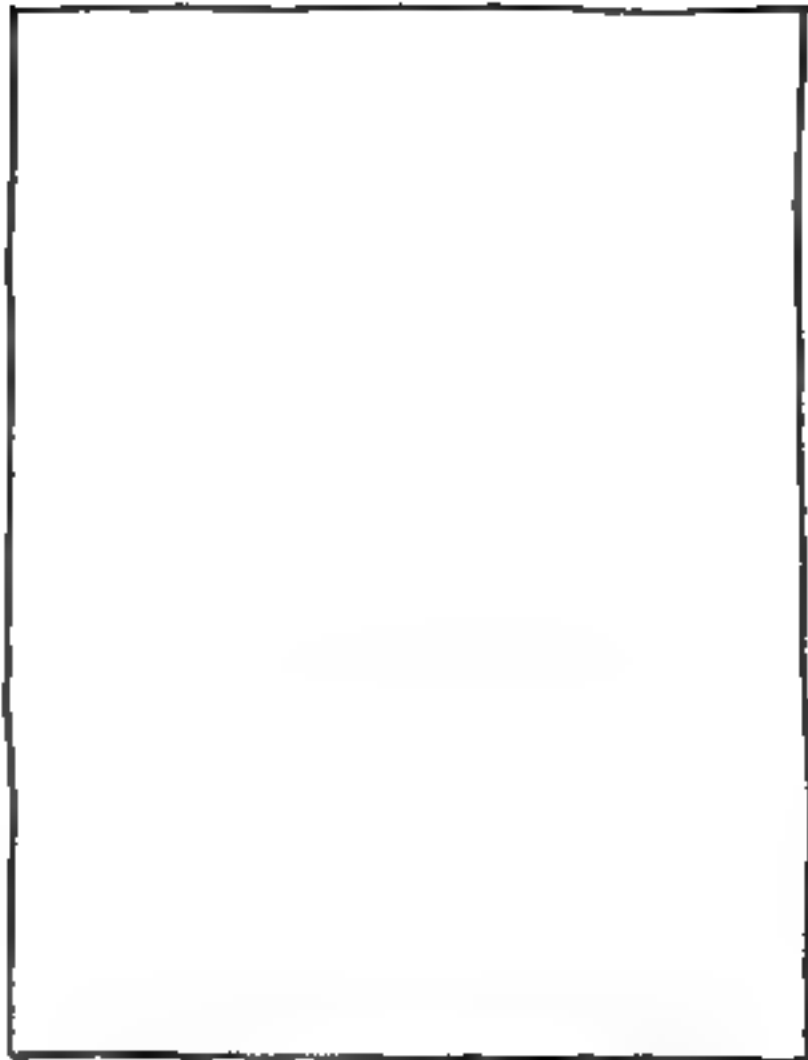
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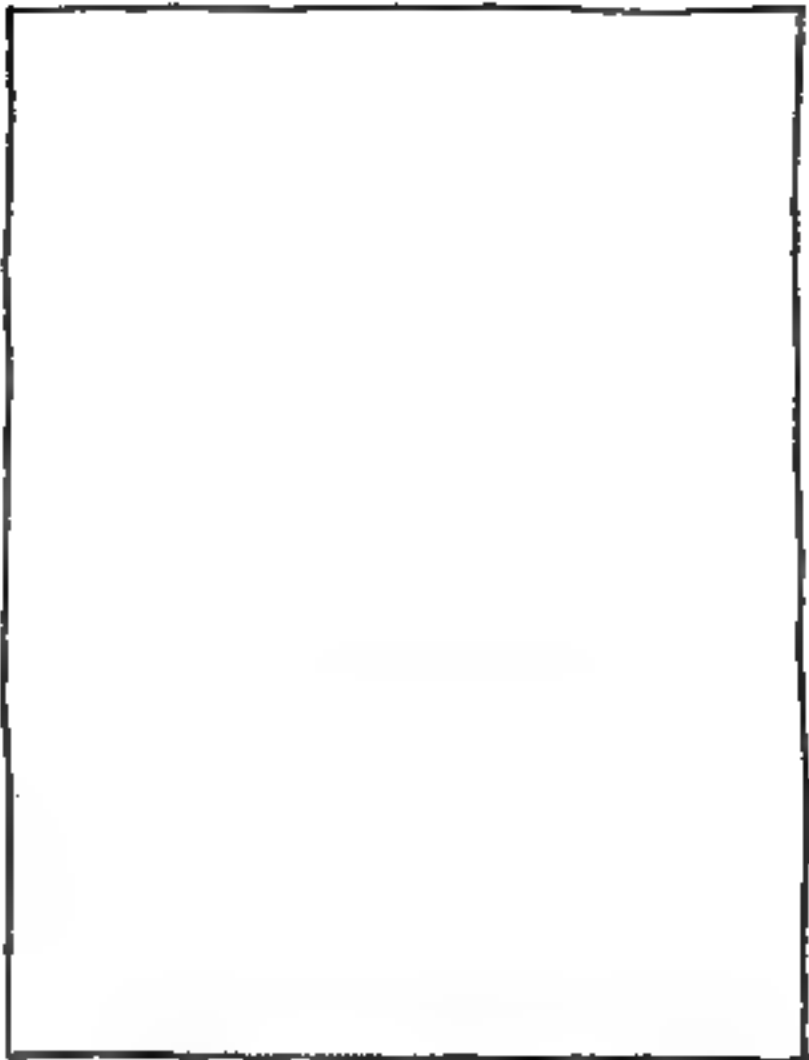
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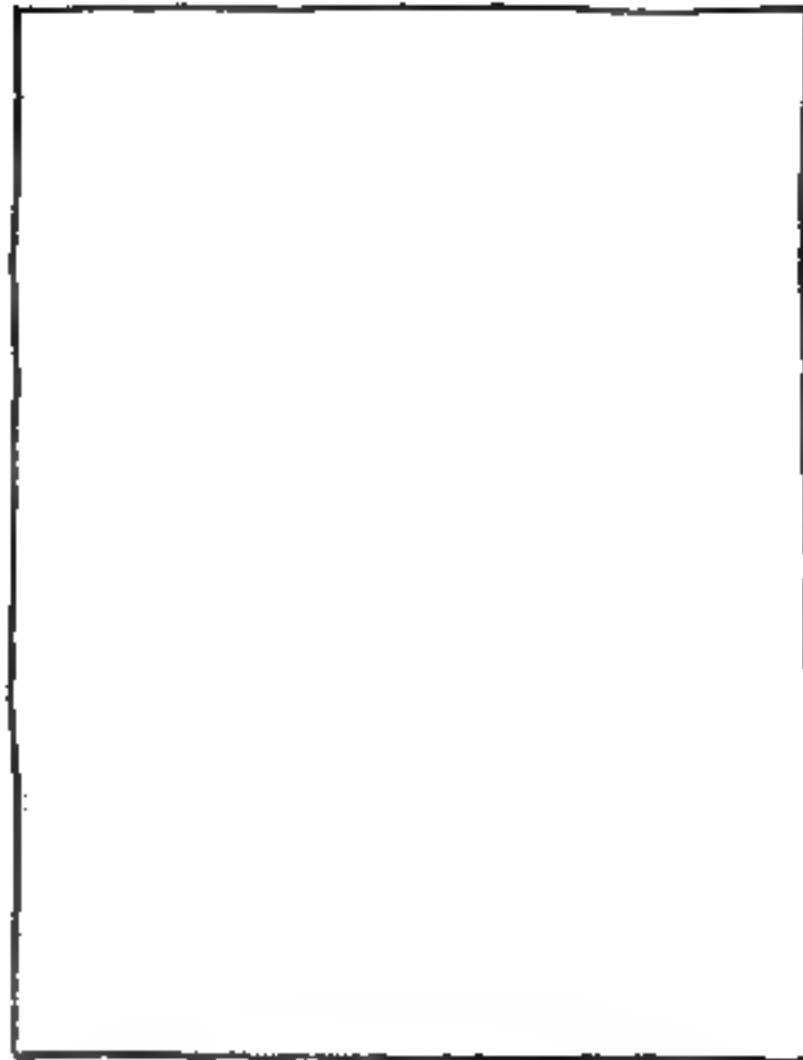
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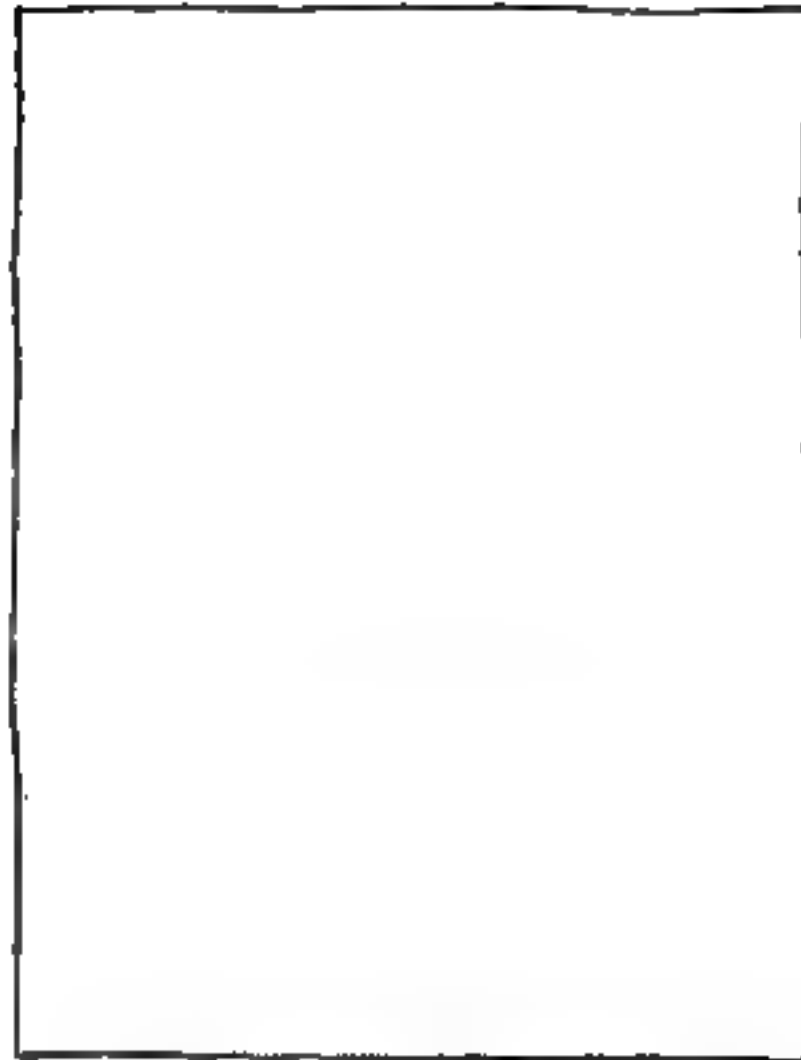
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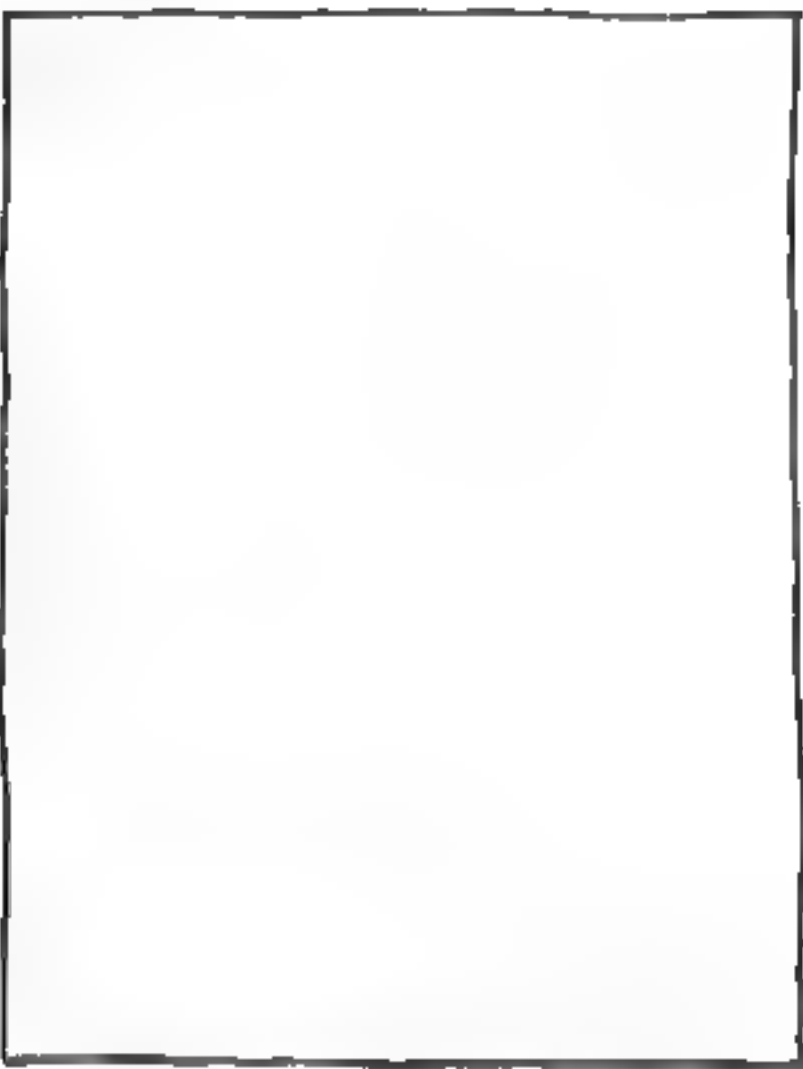
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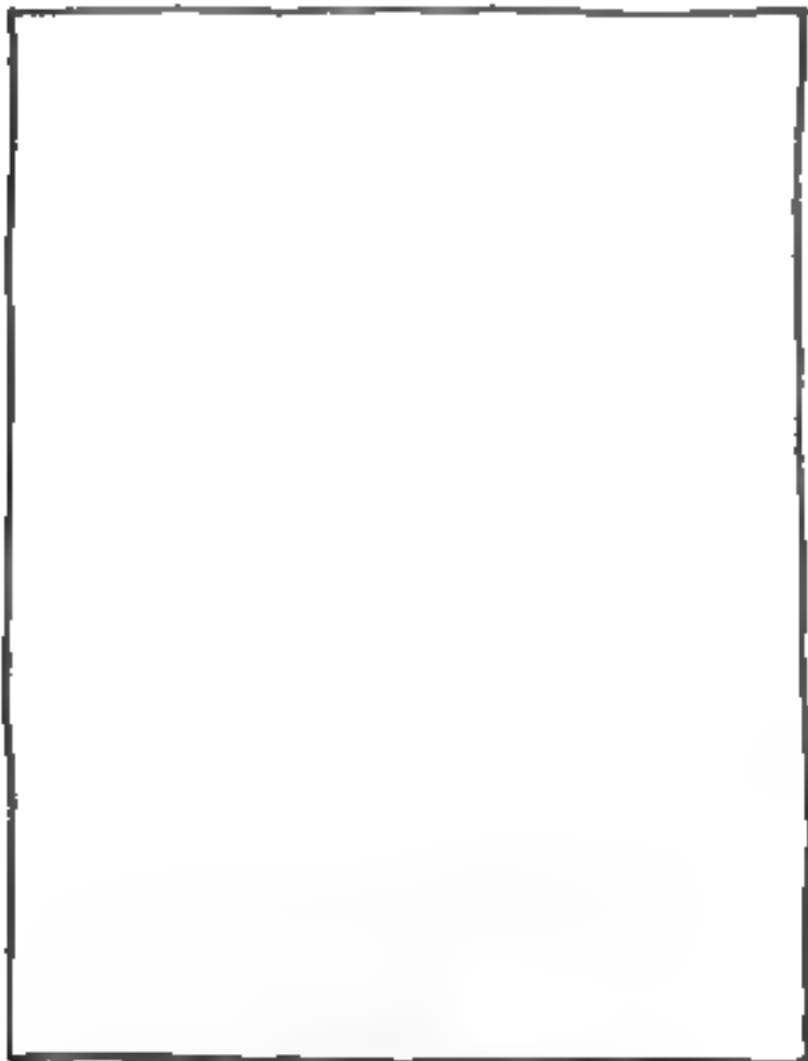
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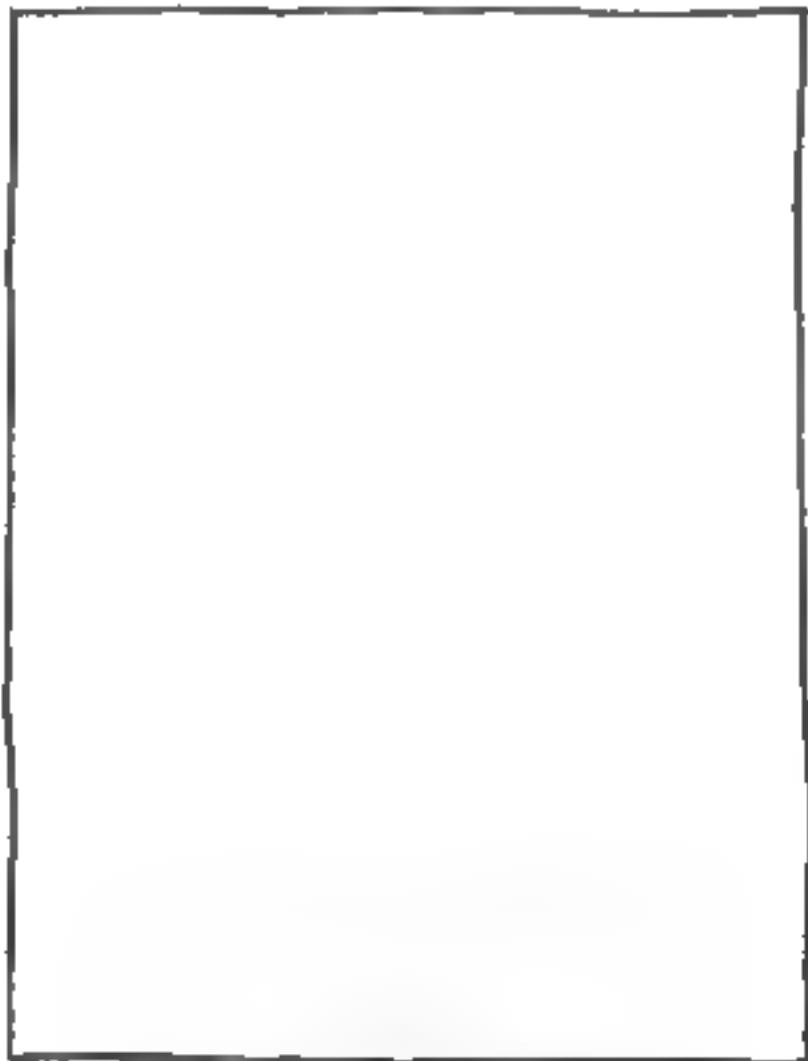
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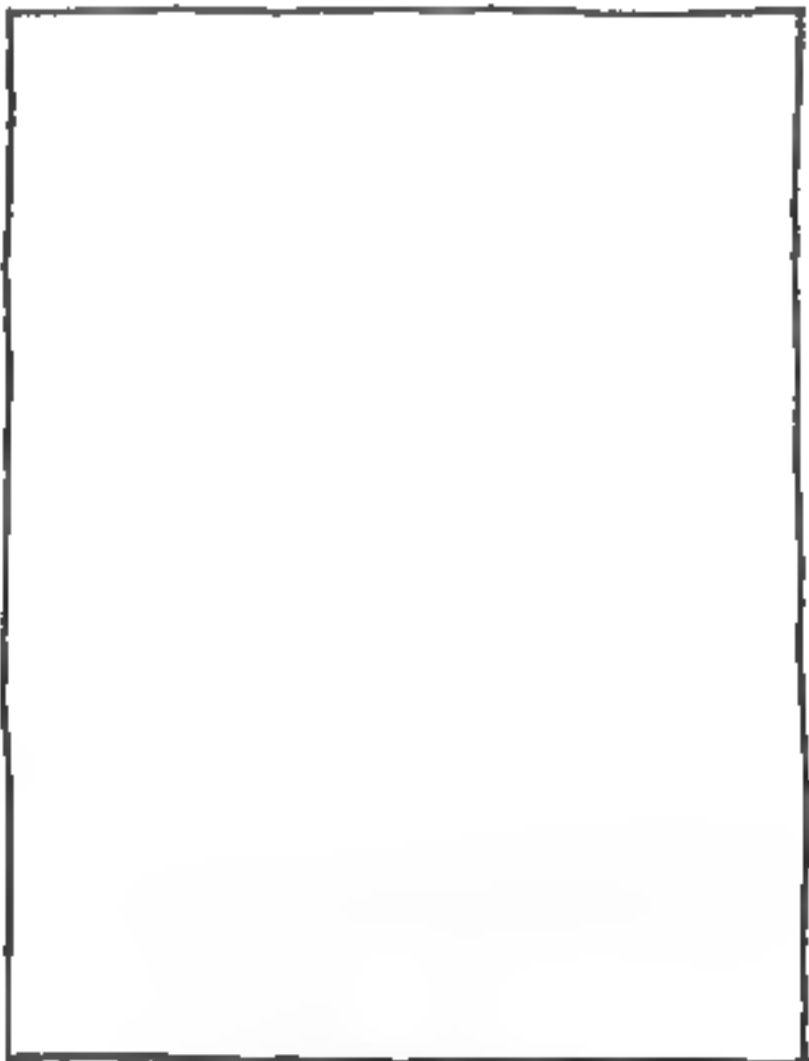
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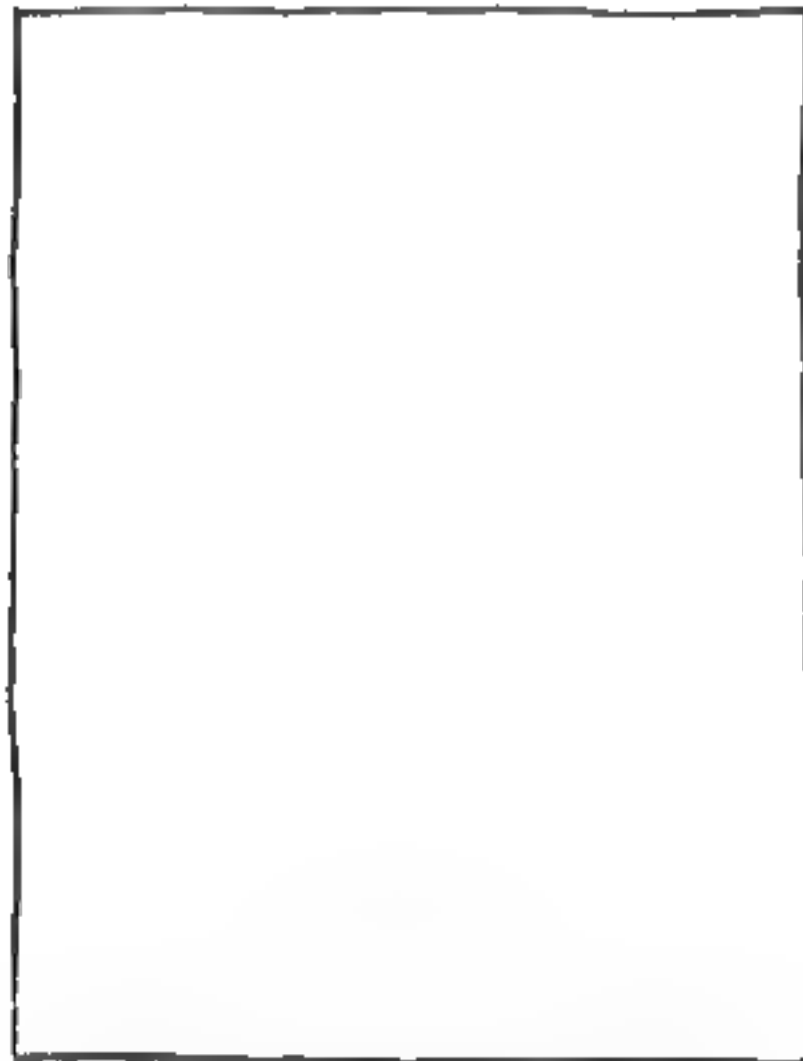
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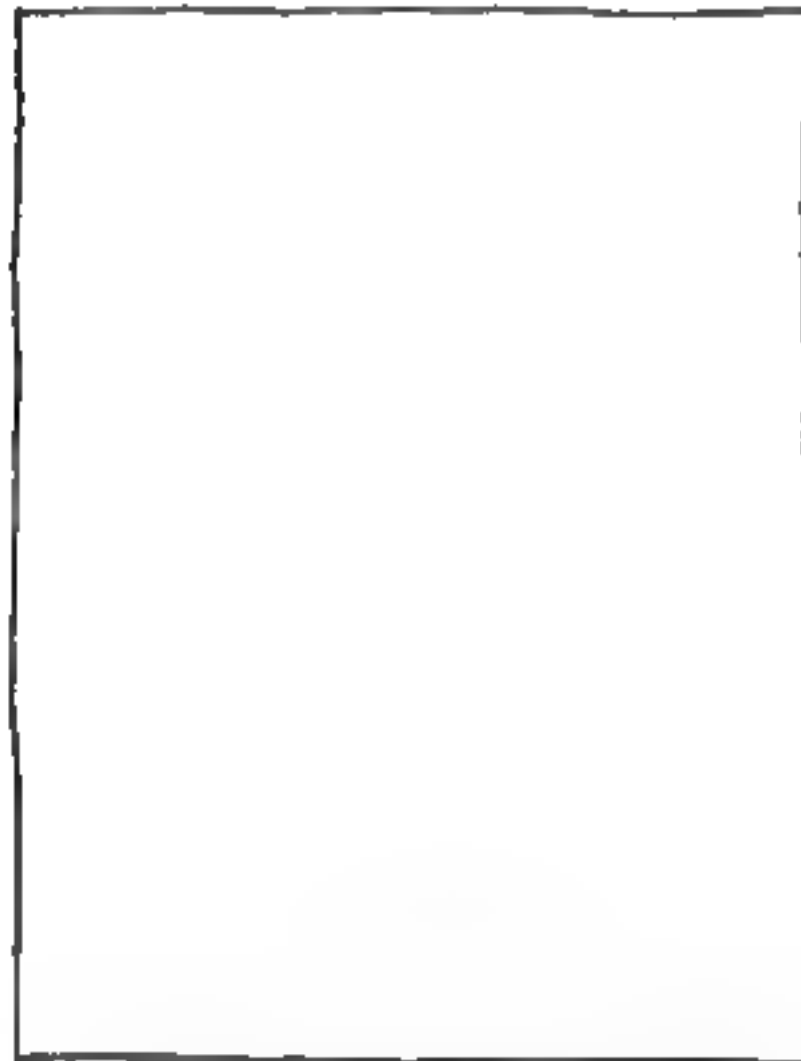
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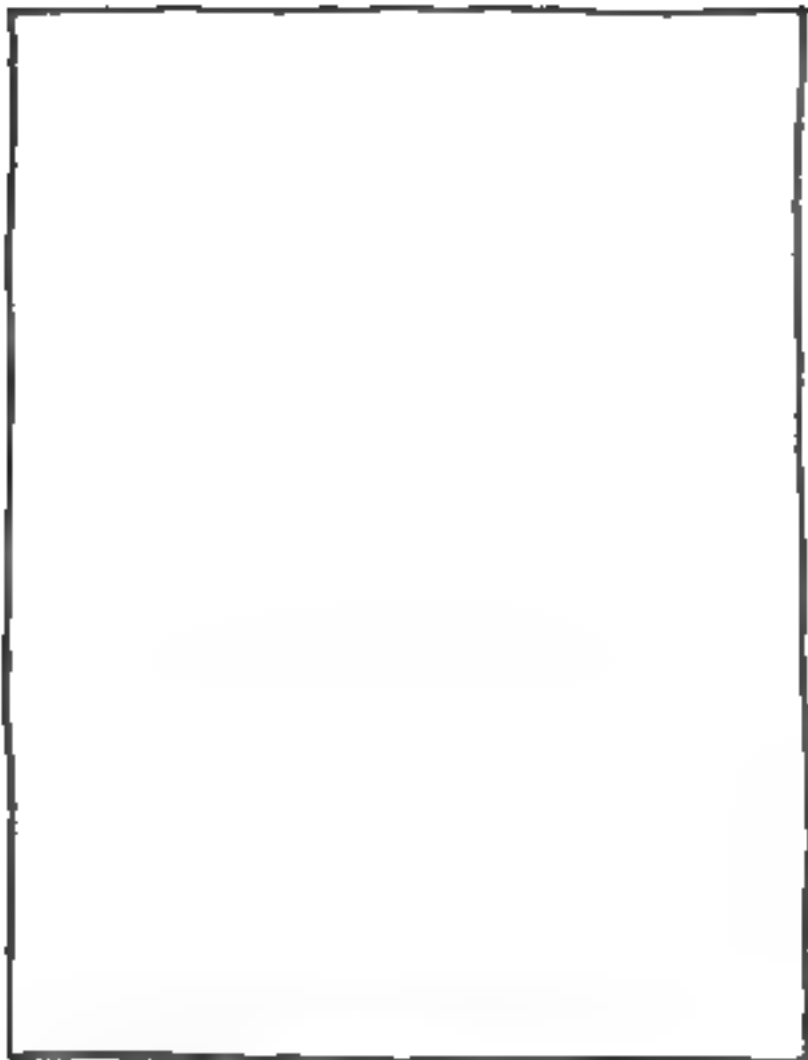
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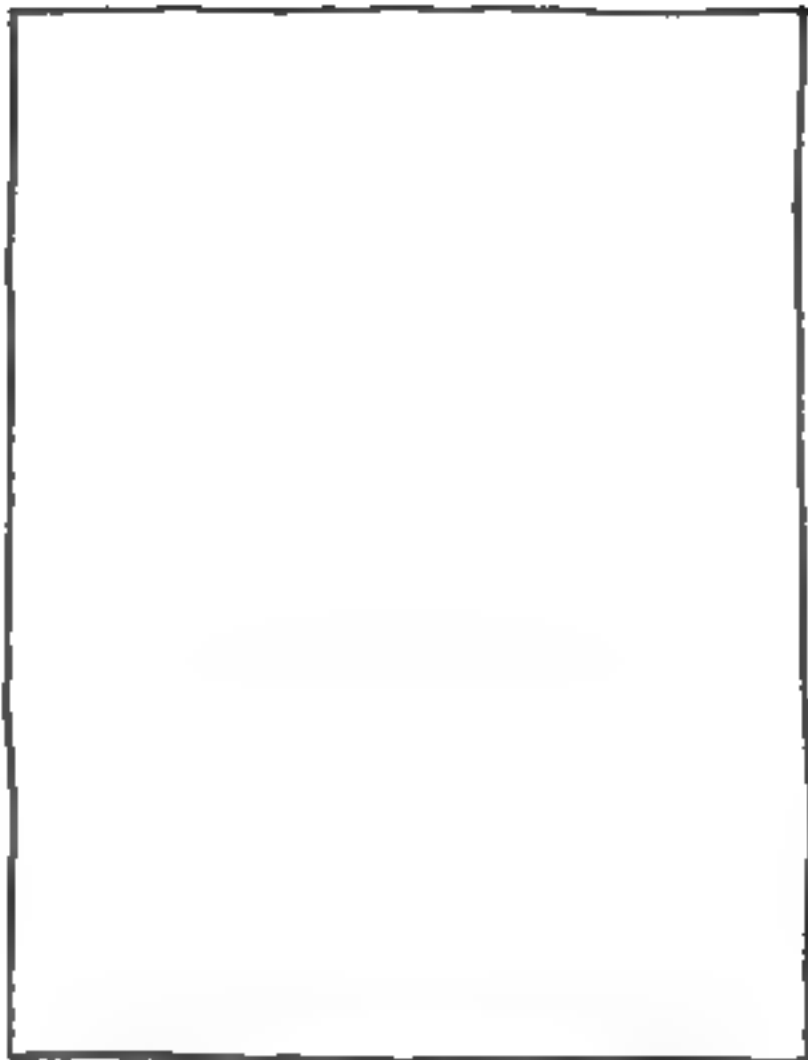
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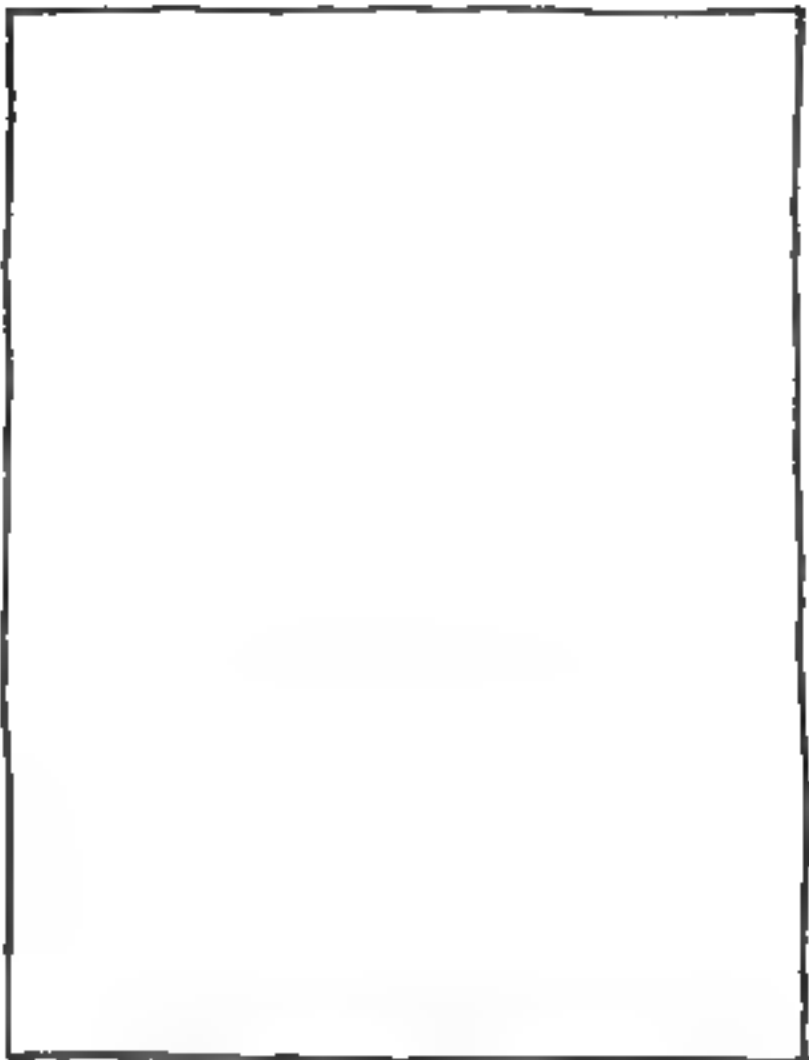
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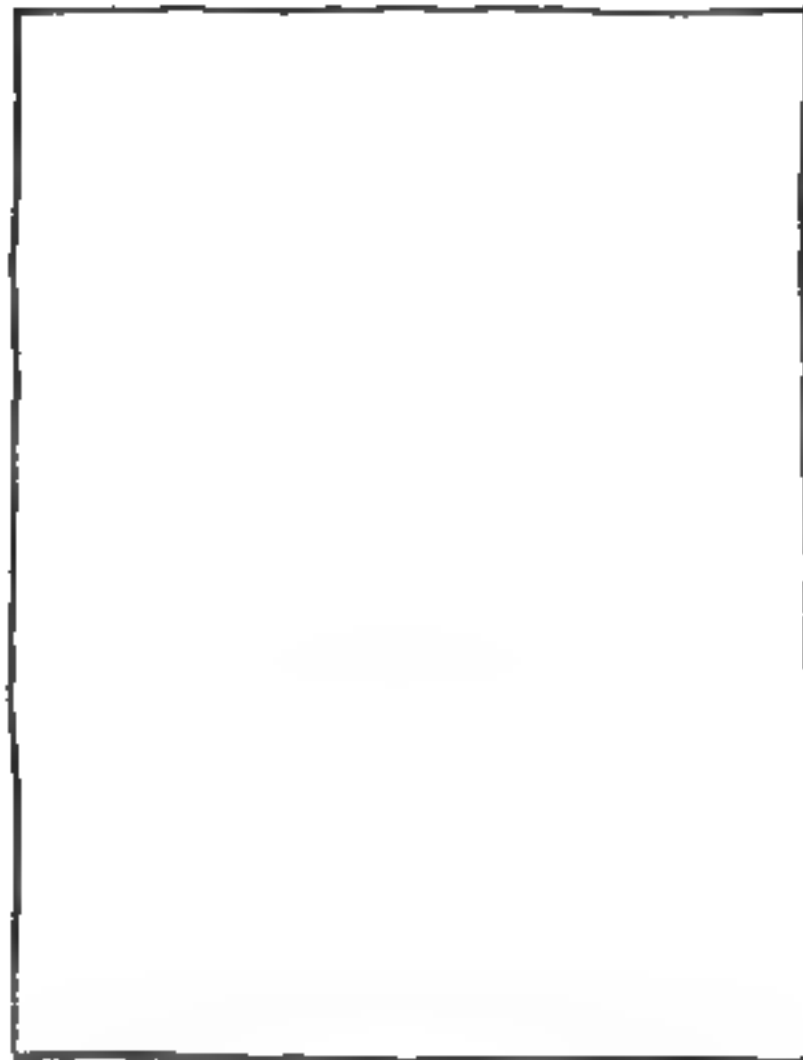
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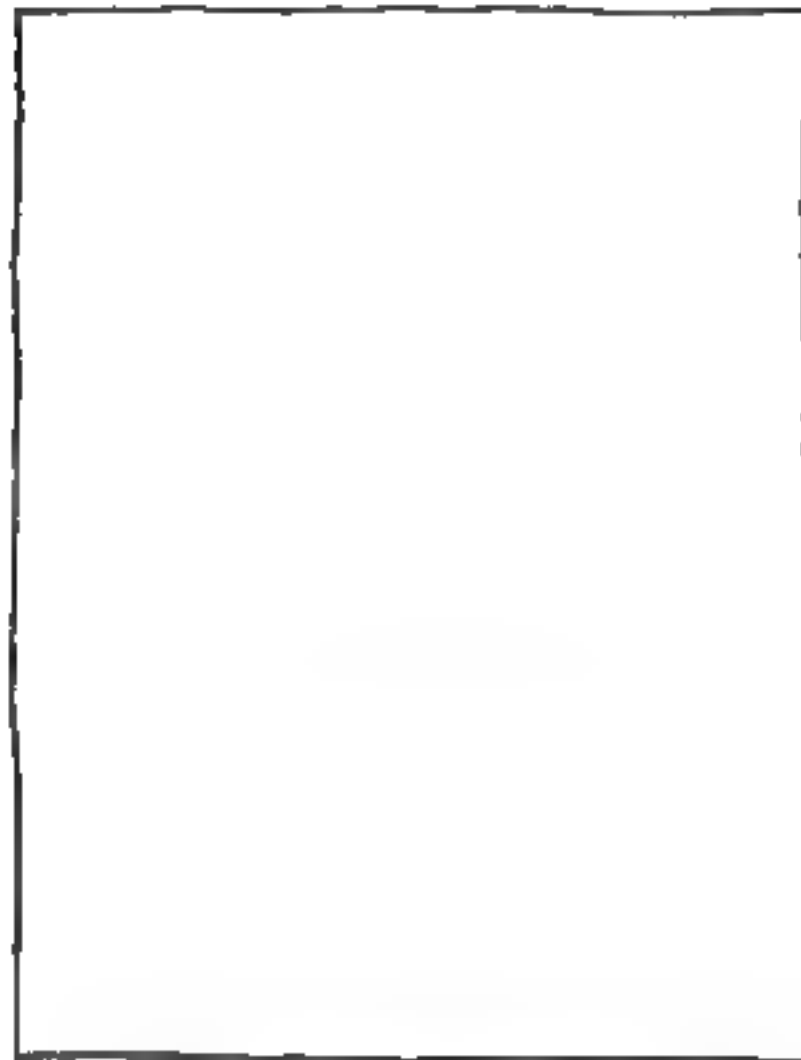
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**COMING
SOON**

On the next page you'll see the original proposal for The Walking Dead as it was sent to Image. This was sent in somewhere around the end of November 2002. Eric Stephenson (now Publisher, then Marketing Director at Image) commented on the fact that the five-page story contained in the proposal was a lame horror movie opening... I'll admit it was terribly cliché, now that I look back on it. After hearing Eric's comments, I came up with the idea of Rick waking up in a coma and restructuring the book around that... and we all know what came of THAT don't we?

Another interesting change to note is that Lori was originally named Carol -- and they were originally from Pennsylvania, presumably Pittsburgh.

-Robert Kirkman

The Walking Dead

By Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore



THE WALKING DEAD™

Robert Kirkman
Tony Moore



Rick Grimes
horrible adventure
continues in
issue 3 in
December



WWW.IMAGECOMICS.COM

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TM
'02

ANNOUNCEMENTS. WE
ASSURE YOU WE WILL
STAY ON AIR AS
LONG AS WE
CAN.

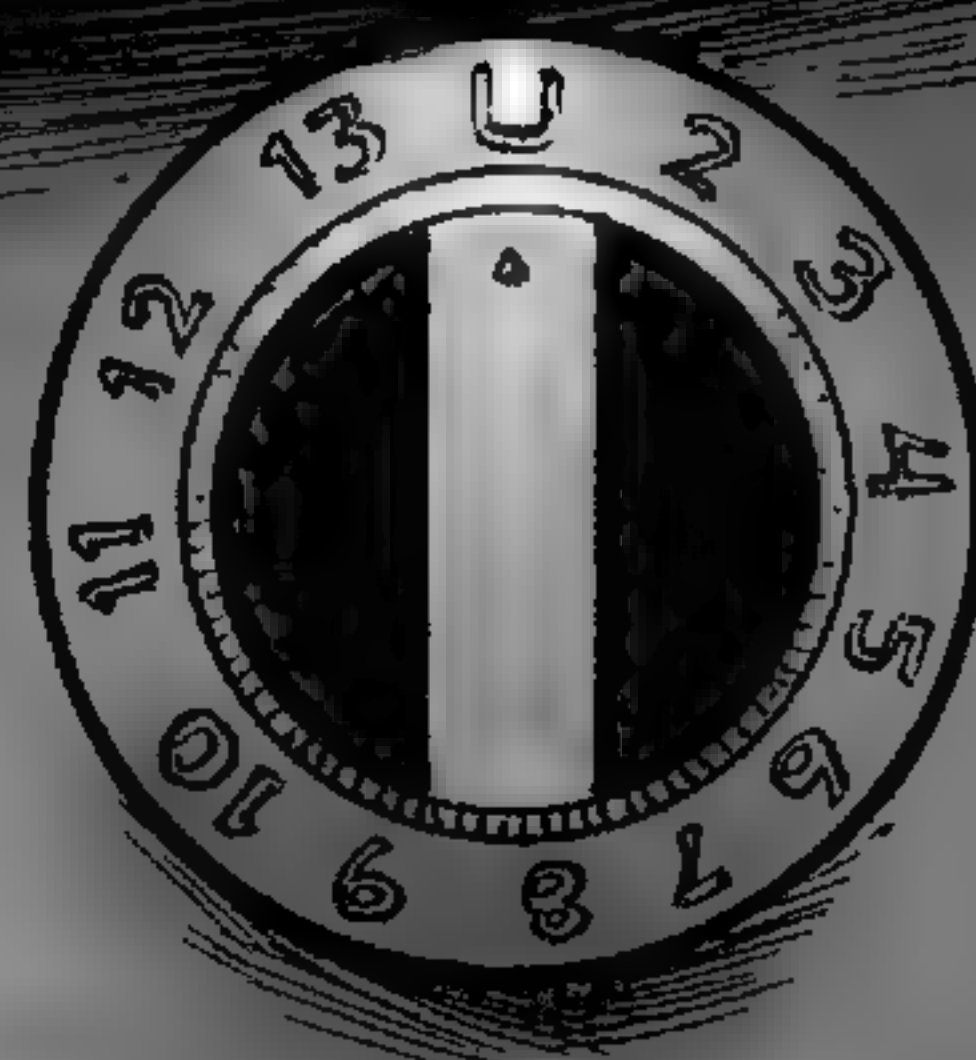
CONTINUING
OUR AROUND THE
CLOCK COVERAGE OF
THE EVENT THAT IS
SWEEPING THE NATION...
BY ALL ACCOUNTS THE
DEAD SEEM TO BE
LEAVING THEIR GRAVES...
RETURNING TO LIFE...
AND FEEDING ON
THE... FLESH... OF
THE LIVING.

YES, YOU
HEARD ME
RIGHT. THE EYE
WITNESS REPORTS
FROM ACROSS THE
GLOBE HAVE ALL
BEEN CONFIRMED.
YOU'VE SEEN THE
STUNNING FOOTAGE.
THERE IS NO DENYING
THIS HORRENDOUS
NEWS.

IT IS
THE HUMBLE
OPINION OF **THIS**
NEWSMAN, THAT
WE MAY WELL BE
WITNESSING...THE
END OF THE
WORLD AS WE
KNOW IT.



Kirkman & Moore
ELECTRONICS INC.





JESUS! THIS IS JUST A SAD WAR OF THE WORLDS RIP OFF!

I--I DON'T KNOW, RICK... I THINK THIS LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE REAL.

IT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A WHILE.



OH, COME ON, CAROL! "WE MAY VERY WELL BE WITNESSING THE END OF THE WORLD." THIS SOUNDS REAL TO YOU?



THE NEWSCASTER SEEMS SCARED. HE WOULDN'T SEEM SO SCARED IF IT WASN'T REAL.



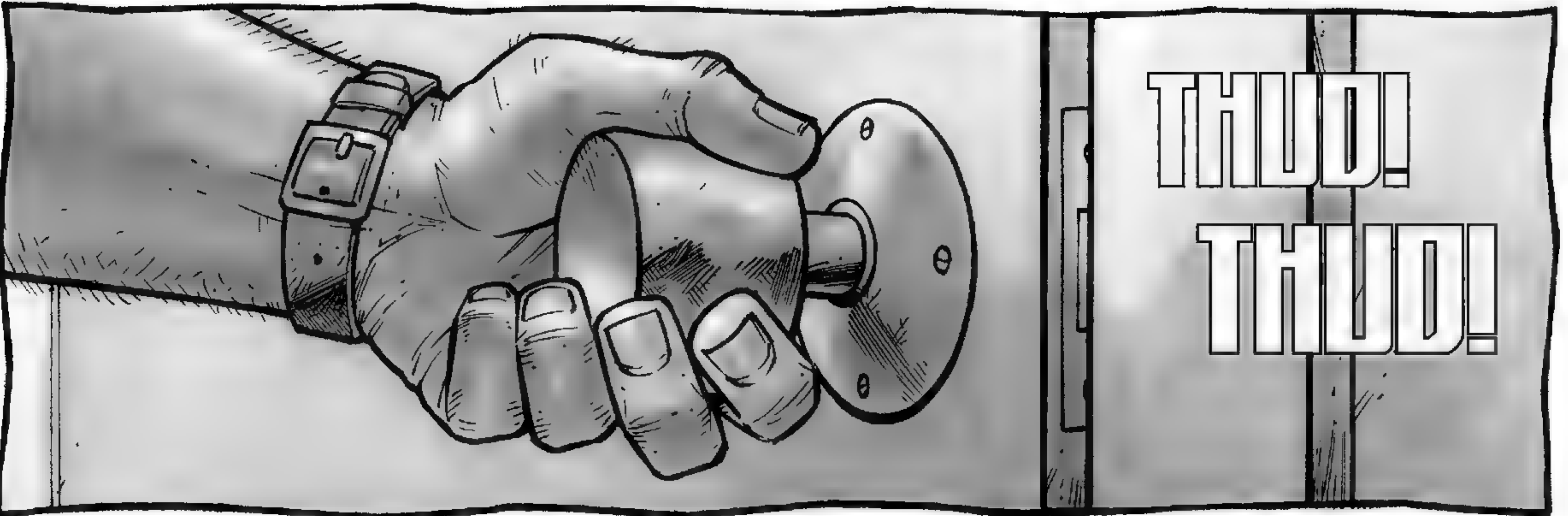
OF COURSE HE SEEMS SCARED! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE THIS CRAP BELIEVABLE.

I'M NOT LISTENING TO ANOTHER WORD OF THIS...

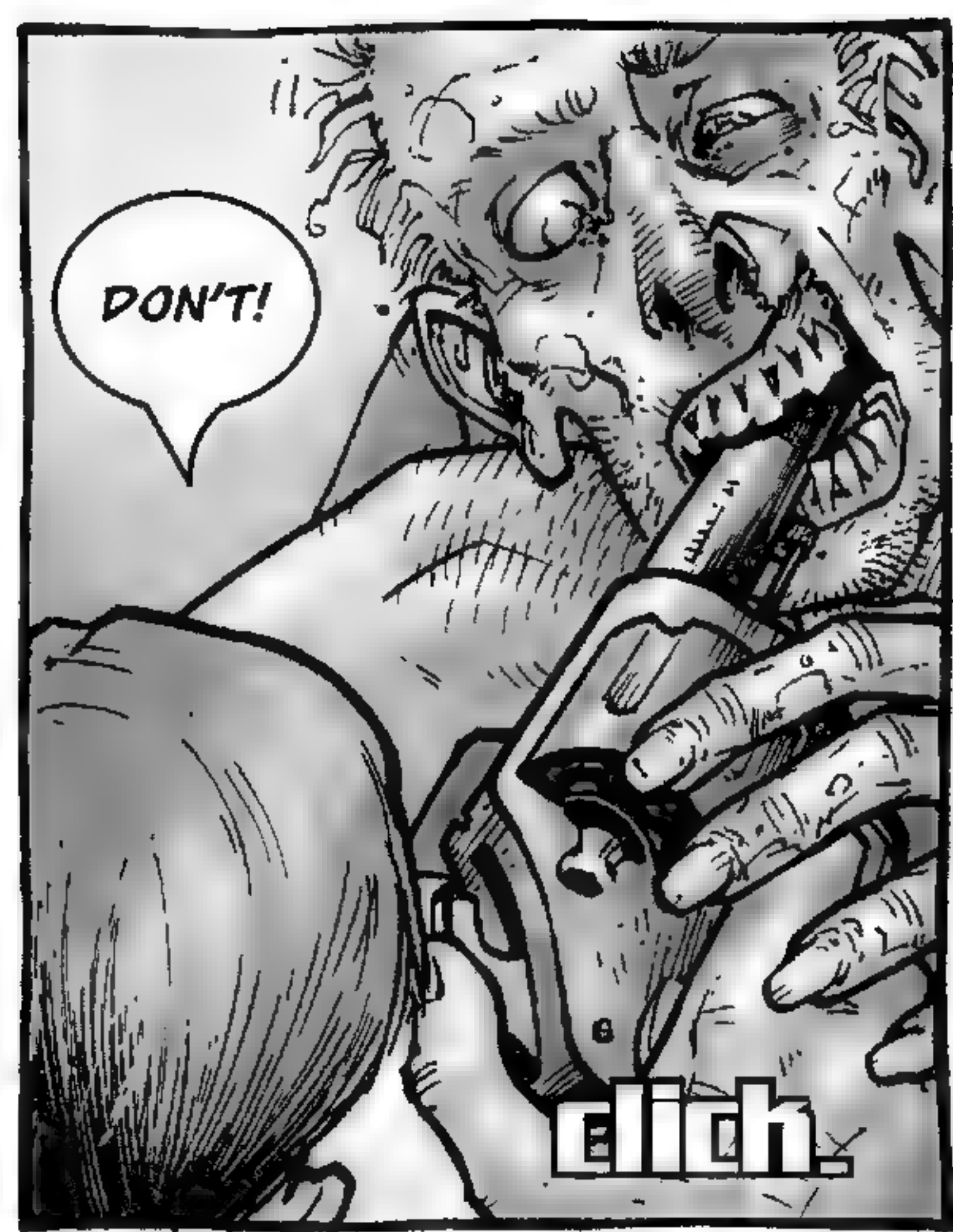
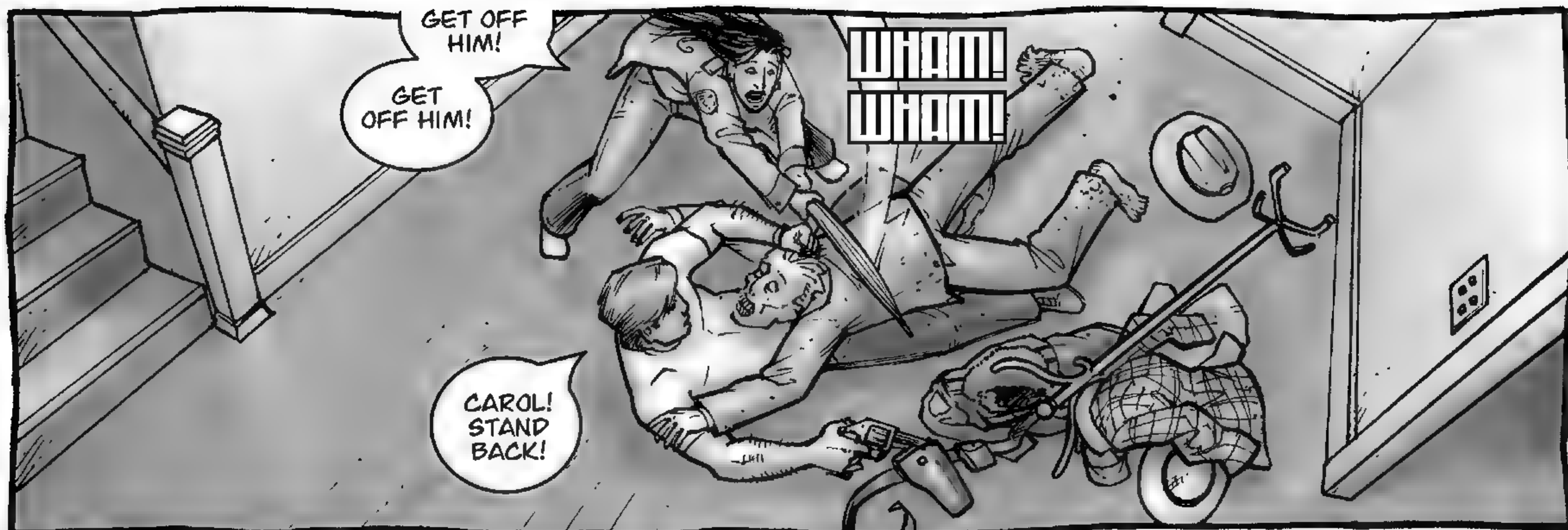


...I'M TURNING THIS THING OFF AND WE'RE GOING TO BED.

NO!







BLAM!



The Walking Dead Proposal

Story

Rick Grimes is a small town police officer in the state of Pennsylvania. He lives in a nice house out in the county with his wife, Carol and his son, Carl. Rick doesn't see much action, aside from target training he's never even fired his gun, he's by no means a hero. When the news hits that the undead are roaming the countryside committing acts of mass murder and eating their victims Rick must rise to the challenge to protect his family from the madness around him.

This book is about a man that will do anything to ensure that his family is safe. When private residences are deemed unsafe Rick takes his family on the road, in search of food, shelter, and something that at least resembles stability. We follow the Grimes family as they try to find a way to return to the normal life they once knew. The first story arc will detail their trek across the state that results in their takeover of an abandoned high school. This high school quickly becomes a well-defended stronghold, as life in America turns into something not unlike medieval times. Once a safe base of operations is established Rick will lead an army on a quest to expand the safe zone, and eventually take back the planet... or at least try.

Format

The Walking Dead will be black and white, just like the best horror movies, in fact, even the covers could be black and white, further cutting down on the already minimal printing costs. The art will be completely gray-toned. Each issue will be a standard 22 pages. At the end of each year (sales allowing) a trade paperback collecting the 12 issues from the previous year will be released the same month as the first issue of the following year, providing a perfect jumping on point each year.(volume 1 shipping the same month as issue 13, etc.)

Contact

Robert Kirkman

Another little known fact is that this series was originally planned to be called Night of the Living Dead, which looking back, would have been the most inaccurate title this book could have had.

NOTLD somehow fell into public domain, which means nobody owns it and is why there are about ten thousand different DVDs of the movie. So when I was planning my zombie epic I thought I'd use the name and get a little recognition out of it. It's tough starting a creator-owned book these days and every little bit of recognition you can get helps.

Everything created for the book was original, we were only using that title. The first page of the proposal used some dialogue from the movie and the plan originally was to have the story take place in the '60s. Which is why Rick and Lori (Carol) have such a crappy TV in the proposal story.

Jim Valentino (former publisher of Image Comics) suggested that if everything was original why not just change the name and own it. He pointed out that even though NOTLD was in public domain and we could use the title, it made no sense to create something under that title that couldn't be owned. Smart man. So I came up with the title The Walking Dead and the rest is history.



On this page you'll see the original first page of the proposal and the original zombie faces. Another thing Jim noted about the NOTLD proposal was that the zombie wasn't rotted enough. Our plan at first was to have fairly normal looking zombies early in the series and have them get grosser as the book went on. But I had Tony rot this zombie up to make Jim happy.



THE RISE OF THE WALKING DEAD

Image publisher Eric Stephenson talks with Robert Kirkman about The Walking Dead's first decade—and what comes next.

Eric: I brought this up when we talked at Image Expo, but the tenth anniversary of The Walking Dead makes me think about the fact that you and I have actually been working here at Image for 11 years now, almost exactly, because you started doing stuff at Image in 2002.

And the first thing you did was Super Patriot with Erik Larsen and that was kind of how you got your foot in the door. But you and I met shortly after that at a barbecue at Josh Blaylock's house in Chicago. We were both at Chicago Con and after talking to you for many months on the phone, it was interesting to actually meet you in person. And we've kind of been doing this talking on the phone thing and working together ever since. That's not really a question. That's just a statement.

Robert: *No, no, I'll dive in. Listen, I feel like our relationship and The Walking Dead are intertwined in really cool ways because when The Walking Dead started, you were the Marketing Director at Image and over the ten-year life of The Walking Dead, you have actually risen through the ranks at Image, going from Marketing Director to Executive Director to Publisher, along with The Walking Dead. And our relationship has grown and your working situation at Image, it's expanded as you've taken more and more control. It's all intertwined and I think that's kind of a cool thing.*

Eric: Well, one of the cool things about it, one of the great things about comics in general is when you can work with people that you get along with really well, it just kind of makes the whole process a little bit better. There are a lot of people that you talk to just over the phone or through email or whatever, and you never actually have that much contact with outside of conventions. But when you meet people and actually spend



time with them and get to know them, that kind of makes things just a little bit better for everybody involved. I know that we were talking on the phone a lot before The Walking Dead came around.

I remember around the time you were pitching the book, you pitched a couple of different things. You initially pitched a book called "Death Planet." Then you pitched another version of The Walking Dead that wasn't the final version. And then you pitched The Walking Dead. But whenever you would pitch something, we talked a lot about this stuff on the phone, whether it was at work or you would call me on the cellphone and I'd talk to you while I was driving home from work. I think it makes the entire kind of working relationship a little bit better when you have someone who you can actually just say, "Hey, I've got an idea, I want to talk

to you about it.” And I know with Walking Dead, when you did finally pitch the final version of that, it was not immediately met with a resounding yes. As I recall, (former Image Publisher) Jim Valentino was not crazy about actually publishing the book.

Robert: Yeah, the history of it is kind of interesting. I actually pitched a science fiction zombie comic called “Death Planet” as you mentioned with Tony Moore attached on art, and that got turned down pretty quickly and so I went back to the drawing board. I tried to come up with something that was a little bit more relatable, something that was a little bit more down-to-earth.

And what I came up with was essentially The Walking Dead. But at the time, I had the idea that it would be really cool to use the name “Night of the Living Dead” just because it was something that was very recognizable and also something I had heard was in the public domain. So basically, The Walking Dead under a different title and that also was more or less turned down, but the concept I think intrigued you and Jim enough for you to give me some pointers. Basically what I was told was that version of The Walking Dead was cool and all, but you never want to use “The Night of the Living Dead” title which again is a blessing.

I really appreciate all of the input that was given to me early on because it very much steered me in the right direction, which was great. But also, zombie books weren’t very popular at the time and I talked about this a lot. I like to say that it would be the exact right thing for Jim as a publisher to do. You know, he said zombie books aren’t very popular historically. They have all done really poorly and if this is gonna sell, it has to have some kind of a hook. And while Jim was doing his job as a publisher, I was doing my job as a creator.

And I really felt strongly that the Walking Dead, as it was, without a hook, as just a straight drama, set against the world of the zombie apocalypse, was a wild endeavor and that the hook wasn’t necessary. So I did what I had to do

and I actually came up with an alternate story that I would say wasn’t necessarily true. You could also use the word “lie,” but that’s no fun. So I came back to you guys and I said, “Look, you’re right, it does need a hook and that’s why after a few issues I’m gonna reveal that this is actually an alien invasion story. That these zombies are actually put on Earth by aliens and it’ll eventually be revealed that it’s this really cool sci-fi epic involving alien invasion. You know the seeds will be planted very early on, but it will be a while before it’s actually revealed.”

Eric: It seemed much more conspiratorial than that at the time because I remember you called up and I think we’d been talking earlier in the day about it and I was like, “Yeah, this isn’t gonna happen. Here’s why,” and I passed it onto you there needs to be a better hook. I got home that night and I think I’d been in the door just a few minutes and you call me. And you had said, “Listen, I’ve been thinking about what you said about the hook and there’s something I haven’t told you yet.”

And you laid out everything that you just said about the aliens and you would be planting all these seeds and later on when the invasion was revealed, it was going to be this really cool thing. And I was just like, “Okay, I think that may be what Jim wanted to hear, that it’s definitely different from any zombie book I’ve ever heard of before. I’ll talk to him about it.” And so Jim got excited by that and we did the book. But then later on down the line, it may have even been once Charlie was on the book...

Robert: No, you called me right after the first issue came out and you had read the printed copy of it. And that’s when you called and you said, “Hey, I read the first issue.” Maybe it was before it was published, when I sent the pages. You were like, “Hey, I read the first issue. It’s great. But I didn’t see any hints at this alien invasion plot that’s being set up.”

Eric: I gave you the benefit of the doubt for more than a couple issues.

Robert: No, I remember specifically, I remember it was after the first issue because you were like, "Is it gonna come in at #2 or #3 or whatever?" We can argue about this. It'll be great fun. And then I replied, "Well, look, I lied to you guys so that you would pick up the book and I'm sorry about that." And your reply to that was, "Oh, yeah, I don't think we really need this." So that was good.

Eric: The first issue was really good and I tell people all the time whenever they ask me about The Walking Dead, that prior to The Walking Dead I had zero interest in zombies whatsoever. I'm not a guy like you who's super into horror movies, and I read the first issue and I was like, "Wow, that was just a good story." And as far as Rick goes, he is a cool leading character. So I was on board. But yeah, it absolutely didn't need to have aliens in it at any point. Looking back now, if that had shown up, it would have just been ridiculous.

Robert: Yeah, yeah. I mean I'm sure I would have done it in a cool way. Don't sell me short. But yeah, it would have been pretty silly.

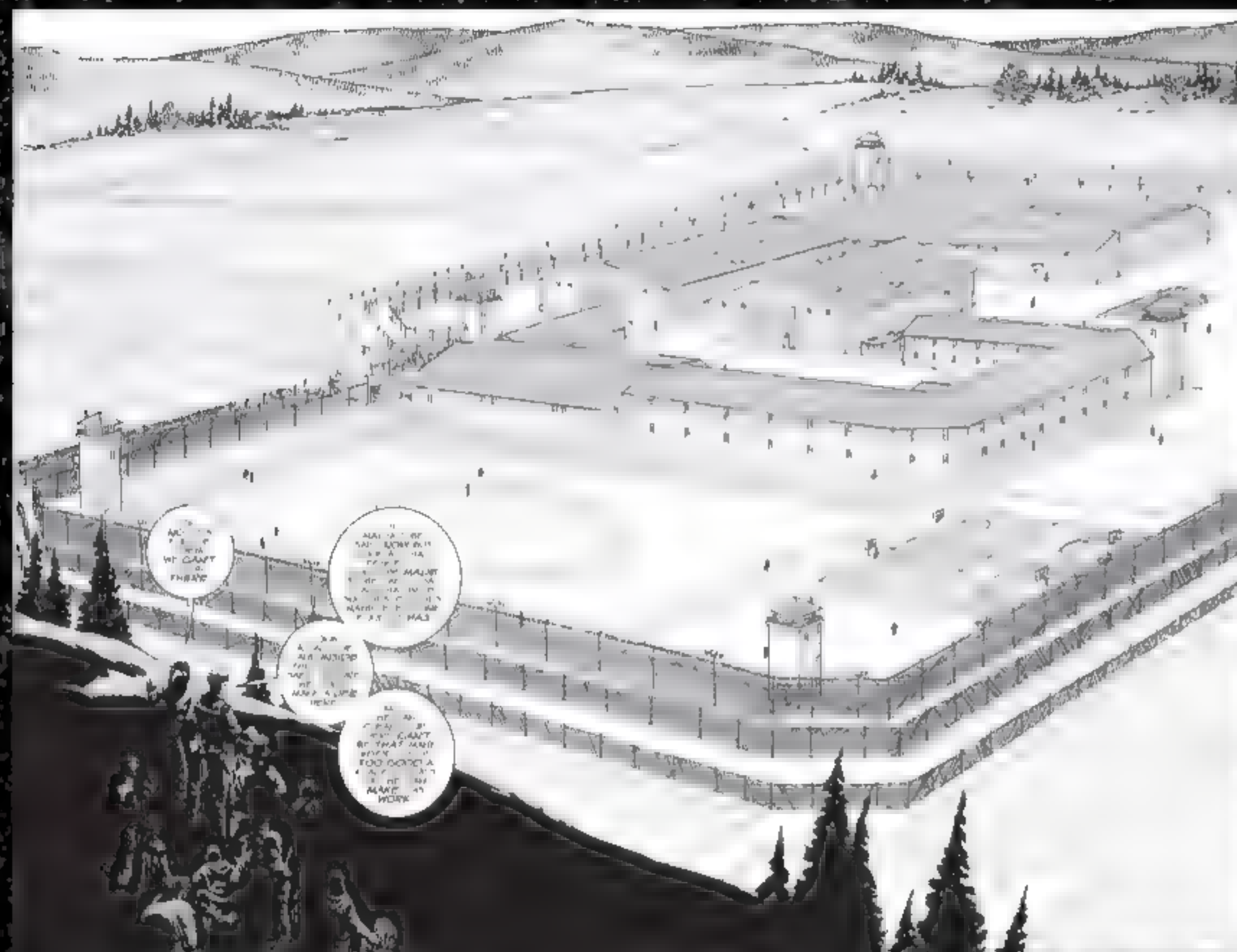
Eric: Now when you pitched this, how far did you have the story mapped out at that point?

Robert: Well, I mean--

Eric: What were your expectations?

Robert: Well, my expectations were that the book would last for six issues and get cancelled. But I was trying to do The Walking Dead as the "zombie movie that never ends." In order to do that, I had to have a pretty long road map laid out so that in the event that it was successful, I would know where I would go and stuff. And the original pitch that's printed on the back of the first hardcover says that they're originally going to find a school and they'll make that a home base, and then eventually that will be their central location and they'll start expanding civilization after that. And they'll start encountering other pockets of civilization.

So I had it pretty roughly worked out to the point where it's at now. Now the school became the prison and they ended up leaving the prison and eventually going to Alexandria before they started encountering other civilizations and getting into the wars and stuff. But I had a pretty rough idea. Now I didn't know who the Governor was when I pitched the book. I hadn't yet decided to introduce Michonne into the book.



But I had a ridiculous amount of stuff worked out, which at the time seemed foolish because everything I had done before then was either not doing too well or had already been cancelled. So I felt like it was pretty bold, but it seemed to work out.

Eric: Yeah, but I think at the same time, whenever you're pitching for a project, whether you're doing a work for hire thing or creator-owned, you kind of have to look forward and plan for the best. Otherwise, you're gonna be kneecapping your own ideas.

Robert: Well, look, people ask me all the time if I'm still into The Walking Dead after having written a hundred issues or whatever. And the truth of the matter is, I get more and more excited the longer it goes because I finally get to do this thing that I had planned, but would only work if the book had been around for so long. And it's really cool to have done all the stories that I've done that lead up to what I'm doing now while I'm planning the next hundred issues. So I kind of feel like I'm always gonna be excited about this because there's always something new that I'm building towards. Something new

that's being set up in the current issues that people may or may not realize.

Eric: Also, one of the things that's kind of unique and cool about *The Walking Dead*, and actually I think about all books you do, is nobody is safe. You know you build up these characters who people are attached to over the course of several issues, and then sometimes they're gone all of a sudden. They get brutally killed or sometimes they get killed in kind of a flash. But anyway, as you get rid of these characters and then you're introducing new characters, it's not like you're stuck doing the same thing over and over again.

Robert: *With Invincible and The Walking Dead, these are series that are designed to last for a very long time. You can't change a book too much. You can't make it completely alien to people that have been supporting it and reading it for years. But if you get into that rut of telling the same stories over and over again, people are gonna get bored and it's kind of a fun thing. It's also the worst thing about comics in general and I think it's why people want to quit comics. Everyone who's reading a comic is like, "How many issues of this thing am I gonna read? When this thing starts suckin', I'm out."*

So you have to constantly be in touch and I like it because it makes you deliver. It gives you that drive to keep things interesting, keep things awesome, and keep moving the story. It is sometimes a grind, but I'm always worried that every issue could be a reader's last issue and so you always have to be doing something cool and something unexpected to keep people going, "Oh wow, this is a really cool thing that I'm enjoying month-in and month-out. I'm gonna stick with this."

Eric: Well, I think you set the bar pretty high right from the beginning. I know still one of my favorite issues is the end of the first trade paperback, issue six. You have the scene where Carl shoots Shane and that's just completely shocking and I think in a lot of cases other writers may have pulled the punch on that one, but

you ended that first arc with such a bang. And I think that just lets people know right from the beginning, don't get too comfortable here and don't expect to know what's gonna happen next.



Robert: *This is a big part of this world. If you weren't killing characters constantly, I feel like it would be unrealistic. You kind of have to have characters dying so that people see how dangerous a world is and how to keep it interesting. Some backstory about that issue though... I really did consider killing Rick instead of Shane. I had a whole storyline worked out where Shane was gonna kill Rick and Carl was gonna see it.*

And then Carl, the kid who knows that Shane killed his father, has to deal with the fact that he's in a camp with this guy. You never know if people are gonna believe him. That was kind of going to be the story of the book for a while with this kid dealing with having to live with this guy who killed his father. And Shane will be very manipulative and like, "No, you don't understand. Your father was crazy or your father was bit by a zombie." Like there was a reason why I had to do this. And so Carl would be questioning what he actually saw.

I thought it would be a cool thing and I really did want to shake things up quite a bit with that issue, and I thought killing the person that people perceived as the main character would be a cool thing. But I had other stuff worked out with Rick and I did worry that it would be too much of a change that was gonna drive people away. So in the end, I decided not to do it.

Eric: Now you mentioned the Governor and that he wasn't a part of your original plan. But obviously over the history of the book, the Governor's kind of as close as you can get to a super villain-type character. At what point did you decide that you wanted to inject a character like that into the book?



Robert: After the prison had been set up and having dealt with Thomas (the serial killer), Rick and the survivors seem to have everything all figured out, and I really wanted to throw things into chaos. And I really changed things up in a way that up until that point, the characters had just been dealing with zombies and that was the main threat of the book. And I thought, what if they encountered the mirror image of their community?

What if someone had set up a small town as opposed to a prison, and there was someone running it who was just like Rick, but was completely the opposite of Rick in a lot of ways. The Governor was always meant to be Rick Grimes, and one single thing had happened that changed him completely.

It was basically the Governor's daughter,

Penny, was like Carl and if Carl had died very early on in the zombie apocalypse, this is how Rick would have turned out. And so that was kind of the thinking behind who the Governor was, introducing this character that was very similar, but in some ways polar opposites, and having him butt heads with Rick for a while.

Eric: Now Thomas was kind of your first human antagonist. Up to that point they're on the run from the zombies, they're trying to survive, they're trying to find a safe haven. And they get into prison and you've got this guy who's killing people and to me, that was the first point in the book where the actual really scary thing in this world is not the zombies, it's other people.

And then you go further into that with the Governor and the people at Woodbury. And ever since they left the prison and have been moving around, everyone they run into is kind of like a different level of scary in terms of how people are dealing with this whole situation. The pinnacle of that at this point is Negan. Was that something that you had planned out from the beginning?

Robert: Yeah, definitely. I mean Shane was the first human that really posed a threat, and I think people saw why he was cracking and it was a very personal story about his love for Rick's wife, Lori, and you kind of got why he turned.

Eric: I guess Shane was the first human threat. But at the time, because you could relate to what he was going through, you kind of didn't see it that way.

Robert: Then you get to the prison and Thomas is a prisoner in a prison. And so you're like, "Well, he's a dangerous guy." He was put in prison, like he was dangerous. And so those two human threats are from the old world, from before the fall of civilization. They're leftover threats that we encounter in our everyday lives. But then starting with the Governor, we're starting to understand that people that survive in this world are changed by this world.

The world itself is actually making everyone more dangerous or dangerous to begin with. And really, one thing I had planned out is that I really tried to be very careful about crafting the evolution of Rick's group. When they encounter the Governor in those issues, they are terrible at dealing with that. Rick gets his hand cut off, Michonne gets raped and everybody gets beat up. And then the Governor attacks the prison and half of them die. They're just ejected from the prison and there's no way to handle it. And they're just really bad at surviving at that point. And I really wanted to show them getting better and Rick especially was learning how to handle these things. By the time the attempted rape of Carl on the side of the road in #57, by the time that happens, you see Rick just go overboard and he hacks this guy to pieces. And we don't really show it, but you know that's what happened and this is Rick finally getting to a point where he's able to survive in this world. So by the time they get where they're hunted by the hunters in #62-66, they deal with the hunters in one issue. They're hunted and they're scared and they're dangerous and they take Dale and they're eating Dale and there's this huge threat that you don't know how they're gonna deal with it. And then Rick finally finds them and they're just dealt with.

It's like, "Oh, you guys are screwing with the wrong people." You don't mess with Rick Grimes and his group. They've learned from the experience at the prison. They've learned from being on the road. And now they're different people. And so by the time Negan is introduced, I have to evolve the threat to match what I've done with these characters. So it wasn't that I necessarily planned to evolve the villains from issue-to-issue, but I feel like as time is passing, the only people that are going to survive are the strong. And the strong in this world are also crazy and dangerous and to a certain extent, evil.

Those are the only kind of people that are going to be able to thrive in this world to last as long as they have. And Rick definitely has blood on his hands and has done some pretty terrible things.

And so at this point in the book, anyone that they encounter, that person is gonna be very dangerous and very capable, one or the other. They can be very good and very capable like Jesus, or they can be very deadly like Negan.

Eric: Right. I was actually just talking to somebody about this last night, because obviously The Walking Dead's on TV now and I feel like Rick fits in very well with the current crowd of lead characters on TV because there's kind of a thread connecting him with Walter White on "Breaking Bad" or Don Draper on "Mad Men" or Nucky Thompson on "Boardwalk Empire," where there are these characters who flawed, but they're not necessarily bad guys.

They're all, I think, at heart, good people who do some really bad things. I just think it's interesting how Walking Dead as a comic book was around before any of those shows were around. So you kind of tapped into something that was kind of out there in the collective consciousness.

Robert: Well, Tony Soprano was around before Walking Dead, but yeah, I think people are really drawn these days to flawed heroes. If you look at entertainment over the years, you have to keep upping your ante and changing things up. And a guy who is a good guy who does good is uninteresting at this point. It's not something that's really going to engage an audience.

I think that to some extent is why DC Comics has such a problem with getting a Superman movie to work. It's not something that modern audiences necessarily gravitate towards. I feel very fortunate that it has kind of become en vogue for these very shady, I guess that's the best word, their morals kind of change on a dime depending on the situation. Characters like that are very popular now. And Rick Grimes is definitely one of those.

Eric: I think part of the reason they're popular is because people can relate to that after a certain extent. The world obviously isn't black and white, or there

are a lot of shades of gray. There's a lot of stuff about Superman if you kind of pick away at it, it's just not realistic in any way. The idea of the guy who just rigidly adheres to this one code, it's kind of like an outdated vision of heroism. I think a lot of people are just like, "No, I prefer my entertainment to be populated with people you can relate to."

Robert: *By the core, it's just more realistic. It's not very realistic for someone to be a rigid, always altruistic, always good person, especially in situations that are interesting, especially in situations that are very stressful or dangerous. You're not going to see someone surviving around the apocalypse that is always getting cats out of trees and saving people. You're not gonna see someone who has cancer who needs to make money, necessarily always making the right decisions and always doing good things.*

So I just feel like it's an attempt to make things a little bit more realistic, a little bit more real world. The Walking Dead to a certain extent thrives just because the zombies are a backdrop and this is really an attempt to tell real stories about how real people would deal with survival. Now a guy's got a pet tiger, that's somewhat out there, but it's always something that could, to a certain extent, happen in real life. And that's what we've always tried to do.

Eric: Now Ezekiel seems to be a character you're having a lot of fun with who is actually a good guy. But something I've observed over the life of the book to date is you really seem to get a kick out of writing the bad guys. Like there are a lot of memorable moments with the Governor. And now with Negan, who is one of my favorite characters over the entire course of the book, I can just tell that you love writing his dialogue.

Robert: *Yeah, it's one of the most fun things about the book right now. It doesn't mean that he's safe, but I really just love getting in there and adding just the most absurd shit. A lot of times he says something that's completely foul, something that I would never say.*

But then every now and then, he'll say something that I've actually said to people at times. So it's kind of fun to get in there and just have a character that can comment on situations in a really absurd way that is very alien to the book. Like no one has ever really behaved like Negan before and to me that is really exciting.

Eric: Oh, yeah. I think just from a reader's perspective, maybe I'm alone in this, but finding the new uses of the word "fuck" that you put into that guy's mouth is very consistently entertaining. Maybe that's the wrong way to characterize it. I guess you find a lot of different ways to cram that word into a sentence multiple times.

Robert: *It's sometimes a challenge, but I feel like it's a worthwhile endeavor.*



Eric: At the end of #114, he says, "We're the big swinging dick of this world. Have been for a long fucking time. But it seems people are forgetting that. So now our big swinging dick is gonna swing harder and faster until we take off like a motherfucking helicopter and blow all these motherfuckers away." Actually, you were kind of holding back there, I feel, because he actually only says motherfucker twice.

Robert: *If he's dropping the f-bomb every other word, it's gonna eventually lose its effect.*

Eric: Actually it's funny. I just switched back to the page before that where it had the panel where he says, "Motherfucking motherfuckers." [laughter] I was working

on a Nowhere Men script and I had a bit where one of the characters was gonna say, "What the motherfucking fuck?" And I didn't go with that because it just sounds like I'm having them talk like Negan.

Robert: Well, sorry about that. [laughter]

Eric: What was the process of coming up with him as a character? Did you know from the beginning that you were going to have this guy be completely over-the-top, foul-mouthed?

Robert: Yeah, pretty much. I don't recall where that came from. I know that I had the plan for Glenn to die for a long time. And there was a time where I was trying to work it out to where Rick would be put in a situation where he would have to kill Glenn in order to save Carl. Because I thought that having Rick murder Glenn would be something that it would be very heartbreaking for him and very gut-wrenching for the readers.



That would lead to a lot of cool stories, but manufacturing a situation where he would have to kill Glenn or Carl would die was starting to be a little irky and wasn't very realistic. The Negan character came out of that situation. I wanted somebody that could really show Rick how powerless he actually is. And he would have to be powerless in order to be put in that position of killing one or the other.

I always think about some of the memorable deaths in the book and again, I feel like escalation is something that's very important to the series and if you're not constantly escalating, then you're

not as good as you used to be. I think if there was never another death that was as horrific and heartbreaking as Tyrese's beheading, then I wouldn't really be doing my job. And so I wanted to really send Glenn off in a way that would top that.

Well, it was my attempt to top it. And to make it just like horrific and also just to show Rick there's this new threat in town and you don't know how to deal with it.

I've kind of gotten to a point where people are like, "Rick can handle anything, right?" And I wanted to come in and very boldly say, "No, actually, Rick can't handle this." And put him in a situation where he has no control. I always knew that Glenn was the one that was gonna get it. A lot of people think that when I was writing the "eeny, meeny, miny, moe" scene that I was actually just arbitrarily picking while I was writing that scene. And that would be awesome, but I actually didn't do that.

I just wanted to make it playful. I knew that the Glenn death was gonna be so upsetting and that it was gonna be so heartbreaking because it was that way for me. As the creator, I didn't want to lose Glenn and I was very upset about that. I always tend to use myself as a judge for how the scene's gonna be taken.

But I wanted to play up how terrible this event is by having a guy seemingly having the time of his life and really cracking jokes and enjoying himself while he was doing this. Because I felt like it would make it sting that much more. And I really wanted to bring Negan in with a bang and set the stage for him in a pretty epic way and the scene kind of came together from that.

Eric: Because you mentioned that you're always looking to top yourself in regard to memorable moments like that, I feel like it shares that characteristic with Invincible. For people who haven't read the book, I guess it's considered kind of spoiler territory, but there's a very brutal battle in #12 that sets the tone for what that book is gonna be like.

There's been a lot of like crazy violence in that book. For people who have read Avengers or X-Men or Superman or whatever, there's no preparation for the kind of violence and brutality that you have in Invincible. So the fact that you are seeking to outdo yourself every time, do you ever worry that you're becoming de-sensitized to that type of horror and violence?

Robert: I don't think I'm de-sensitized to it when we do things on the TV show that we've done in the comics. Seeing them in real life when I'm on set or watching them moving and with sound and looking real on the show, actually disturbs me to an extent that would probably surprise most people. So I know that I'm okay. But I will say that I guess there is a concern, am I never going to not be able to top myself?

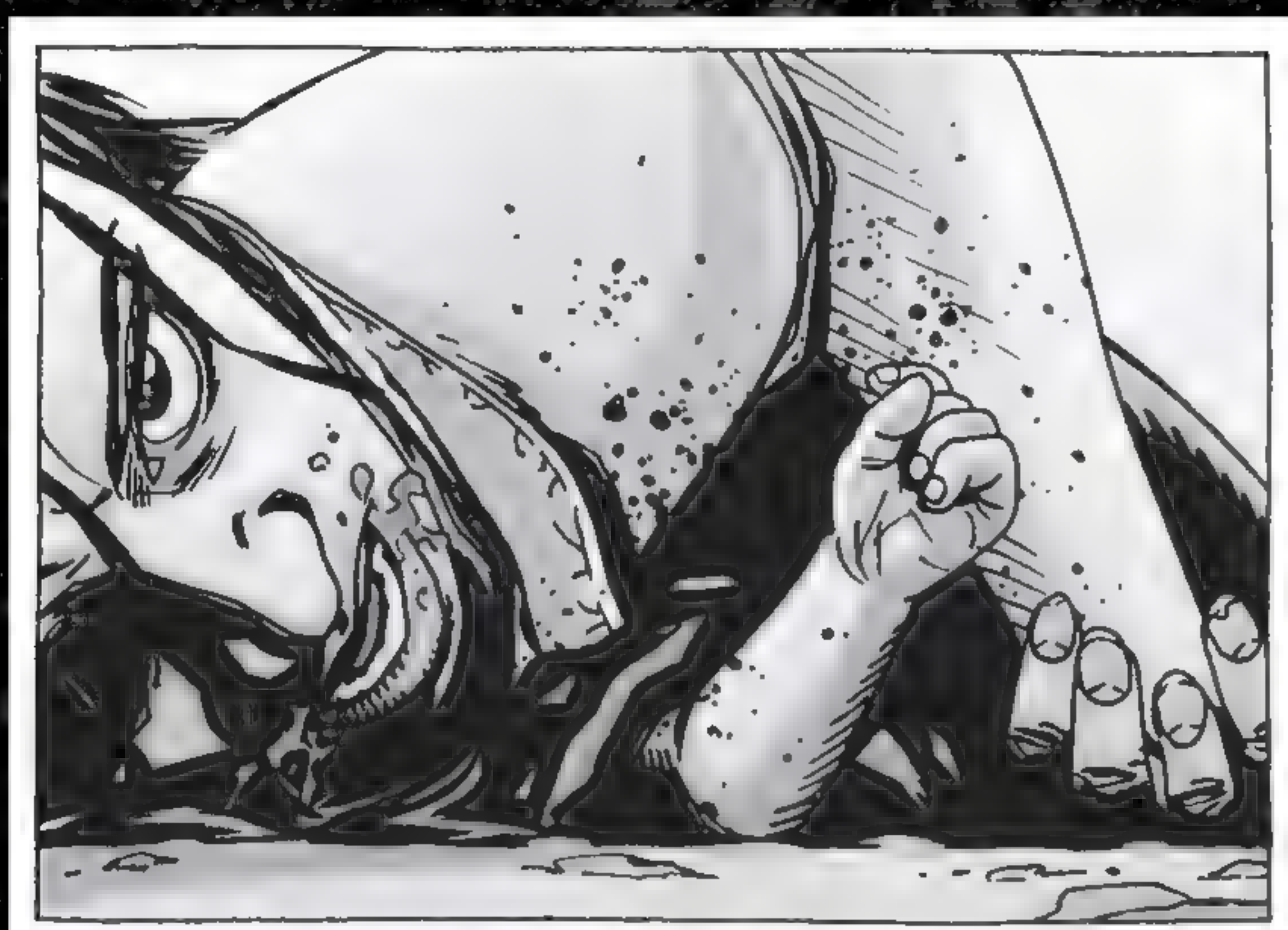
Am I ever going to get to a point where there isn't any way to outdo the things that I do well? All I would really say is I've got a list of things tied up in my back pocket that are kind of cued up that I know will happen to characters eventually. Some of them are so bad I don't really like to think about them. So I know that I'm going to be able to always sort of up the ante and continue to progress that story and to continue to just do unexpected things. And then a lot of people complain about, "Oh, you're just trying to shock people." That's not really it.

I'm trying to tell a long form story that goes for years and years and you have to be able to progress the story in ways that are interesting. I feel like shocking deaths are kind of essential that. I have some long reaching plans that will hopefully ensure that I continue to up the ante. But we'll see. Eventually at some point I'm probably gonna run out of terrible things to happen to people and then I'll end the book. Hopefully that won't happen for many, many decades.

Eric: Now you mentioned sometimes stuff that's done on the show shocks and horrifies you. Has there ever been a point when you've gotten pages back from Charlie Adlard on The Walking Dead or maybe from Ryan Ottley on Invincible,

where you had written some gruesome scene and then you get back to your work and you're just like, "Oh, holy shit, that is way more horrific than I was expecting?"

Robert: Well, I don't know about horrific, but I know that Lori's death in #48, when she's shot and the baby gets shot and then she falls on top of the baby... in the script I had written that I wanted to see the baby's arm coming out from under Lori after she had collapsed, so the people would know that she had fallen on top of the baby and that she had basically crushed the baby. So if they didn't realize the baby had been killed when it was shot, they would definitely know that she had crushed it when she fell on it and then her dead body was laying on it and that they would both be eaten by zombies.



So I wanted to make sure that people knew that that baby was dead, which as I say that out loud right now, makes me a little bit uncomfortable with who I am as a person. But I thought that was important to the scene. I remember saying, "Yeah, I want a terrible scene and Lori is dead so you have a dead look on her face and she's on top of the baby." When I look at that panel even today, it's very hard to look at. When that page came in, I was just like, "Oh, but that baby's arm, that little baby arm. Oh, why did I do that?"

Eric: What's even worse is that when Charlie did that cover for #100 and you got all of the people who have died over the last 100 issues and there's that baby arm.

Robert: Yeah, that baby was on that

cover. Yeah, I may be a little reluctant.

Eric: You made the poster of that, too, and I remember when you said that was going to be a poster and I was just like, there is a poster of a bunch of dead people. Who wants a poster of a bunch of dead people? And it turned out they did because I think orders were really good on that, actually.

Now here's something else though about the baby. Correct me, maybe I'm just remembering wrong, but I thought there was a point where you kind of were toying with the idea of the baby living and the Governor rescuing the baby and raising the baby as his own? Is that something I just imagined or did we talk about that at one point?

Robert: *There was a plan originally that Lori would disappear and then when the Governor attacked the prison on the tank, Lori would be on a leash and riding the tank, and you would find out that Lori hadn't actually died, but that she had been taken by the Governor and made into like a slave wife or something. It was gonna be a heartbreaking thing for Rick to see his wife who had to endure this time with the Governor in order to survive. She would have had the baby during that time and would have the baby with her. I don't know what the outcome of that was gonna be, but yeah, that was an original storyline that I ended up not doing. But yeah, there was some more terrible stuff for the Governor to do that didn't quite make it into the book.*

Eric: Which is probably for the best. It's funny because that actually brings up another thing, which is that I feel like over the years, every now and then I'll ask you things about where the book is going. And you'll say, "Oh, well, this and this is going to happen." And sometimes that stuff happens and sometimes it doesn't. I feel like there have been numerous instances over the years where you've outlined something that was gonna happen over the course of several issues. And at some point you shift gears and you go off in another direction. How often would you say that that sort of thing happens?

Robert: *There's been three or four big times where I've had a shift. I think one of the most memorable ones was at the end of #18, it was supposed to end with Lori throwing her wedding ring at Rick and saying, "I want a divorce" or "We're divorced." And then I was gonna deal with Rick and Lori and how they were stuck in the prison together, but they were ending their marriage, and how awkward that would be and just how hard that would be in an apocalyptic scenario.*

While I was writing that issue, I was realizing this is bullshit. She wouldn't turn on him and she was supposed to be like really, really upset about the way he handled the Thomas thing and the way he was acting with Carl. It just didn't seem genuine to me. So that's why the third volume of the trade, which ends on #18, ends on that cliffhanger with Dexter (the prisoner who tries to remove Rick and the others at gunpoint). I switched gears very late in the game. I've ended trades with cliffhangers since then, which I think is kinda cool. But that time I definitely did it by accident. That was a time where I definitely shifted the storyline just because it didn't make sense. It wasn't as cool as I thought it would be. There have been a few times where I've done that.

I'm always in search of a better idea, so if I'm working on the book and I have a roadmap and I know what I'm doing, but I come up with a better idea, I love the freedom of being able to go, "Okay, this storyline that was gonna take ten issues is now gonna take thirty issues because I'm gonna do this thing in between before I get back to this other stuff, and then I'm gonna wrap that up." It doesn't usually affect the longer plan, the multi-year plan where they're eventually gonna do whatever. But it's like fun little detours here and there.

Eric: I remember talking to you a couple of years back. It was before they actually got to the community and we were talking about what was gonna happen in the book. And you said, "Oh yeah, they're gonna get to this community. They're gonna get in there. Rick's gonna be like the sheriff in the community."

Michonne's gonna hang up her sword. Carl's gonna be going to school and stuff. And then they're all gonna find out that that doesn't work out and Rick, Michonne and Carl are gonna leave." And you talked about what was gonna happen after that. But then it's like once they got into the community and everything was happening, that's not what happened.



Robert: [laughter] Yeah, I was gonna do a stretch on the book where basically Rick, Carl and Michonne had gone through so much and had done so much that they couldn't live in Alexandria. They just didn't fit in. I led up to that a little bit in #75 where Michonne knocks Rick out after he'd gotten into that fight with Pete. I thought it would be cool to show that Rick had kind of preserved the humanity of everybody else in his group to a certain extent.

So that Glen and Maggie and some of the others were like, "Oh, I like Alexandria. I can totally live here," but Rick and Michonne and Carl were just completely unable to trust these people and completely unable to relax and exist in this community. So I was gonna have them leave and live on their own in the wild for a while. The book was just gonna follow those three characters for a number of issues before something would happen and they would come back to the community.

And then I thought it would be kind of cool to come back to the community after a while, see different things that had happened and different things that had changed before it got back into

setting up things for Negan and "All Out War" stuff that we're getting into now. At the end of the day I just decided that it wasn't really a necessary detour. As cool as I thought the ideas were and how neat I thought a few of the issues would have been, I felt like their journey, getting Rick with Andrea and leading up to the things that I'm doing now, is a little bit more important than taking that detour.

Eric: Have you ever gotten a pretty good chunk into an issue and said, "This isn't working, I'm shifting gears and doing something else?"

Robert: No, usually I know where I'm going by the time I'm actually typing script. I always plot things on paper with a pencil before I type the script. So I always have very extensive notes of what happens on every page. I've got a pretty clear roadmap when I go to write my script. In that stage, I have replotted issues before, or replotted like half issues or so after plotting them out. I've been like, "Oh, it doesn't have enough punch," or "Oh, shit, I forgot, I need to be at this point by the end of this issue or else I'm not gonna be able to do this two issues later." So I'll tuck in things or cut things or move things around as they're needed. So a lot of that kind of stuff happens in the plot stage. By the time I'm writing scripts, I'm basically just transcribing the story as it's been laid out. But I have thrown out entire issues of plots before.

Eric: Now we haven't really talked about Charlie at all. But at this point Charlie has been drawing the book for 109 issues.

Robert: Yeah, since #7.

Eric: I worked with Charlie back in the nineties. I've known him for a long time. But his work on the book and the way he's grown as an artist has been pretty remarkable to me. I mean obviously he's been around this entire time so you have to love working with him, right?

Robert: No, actually I hate him. But no, [laughter], he's great. I mean Charlie really is the guy who's brought this world to life. Tony (Moore) did the first six

issues and Tony was a friend of mine. I met him in the seventh grade and we kind of came up in comics together. We did *Battle Pope*. We did things like *Brit* and other things leading up to *The Walking Dead*. Tony's just not a monthly guy and I kind of knew that when I started *The Walking Dead*, but it really started going off the rails very early on.

Once it became clear that Tony wasn't gonna be able to keep up the monthly deadlines and just deliver the long-form year upon year upon year storyline that I was setting out to do, I needed to bring somebody in. Charlie was somebody that I've been circling for a long time and someone who I've been a fan of his art on things like *Astronauts in Trouble* and *The X-Files* comic that he did at Topps, and the various comics that he did at Marvel and DC. He kind of tended to bounce around on those books. He didn't really have a long run on any one series at Marvel or DC. But I was always aware of his stuff and I thought that he had a really cool book in him that he'd be able to do for a long time.

When he agreed to do the book, I was ecstatic just because his art style was so interesting. It was really different from what Tony was doing at the time. But to me, especially looking back, the shading and the mood and the starkness of it, it made the world seem more bleak. It made the world seem more deadly.

I like to say that Tony's zombies look like really cool monsters from a monster movie. They were very threatening and very terrifying and awesome. The guy draws like the best zombies in the business. But for *The Walking Dead*, Charlie's zombies look like people, and they look pitiful and they look sad. I think that's something that plays more to *The Walking Dead*.

When you see a Charlie Adlard zombie, you can see a level of sorrow on their face. They tend to be a little relatable and you can kind of picture what they've gone through to get them to this point. It's that actual level that he brought to the book that I really think brought it to the heights that it's reached and really kind

of solidified the look of it and the world. And really kind of made it what it is.

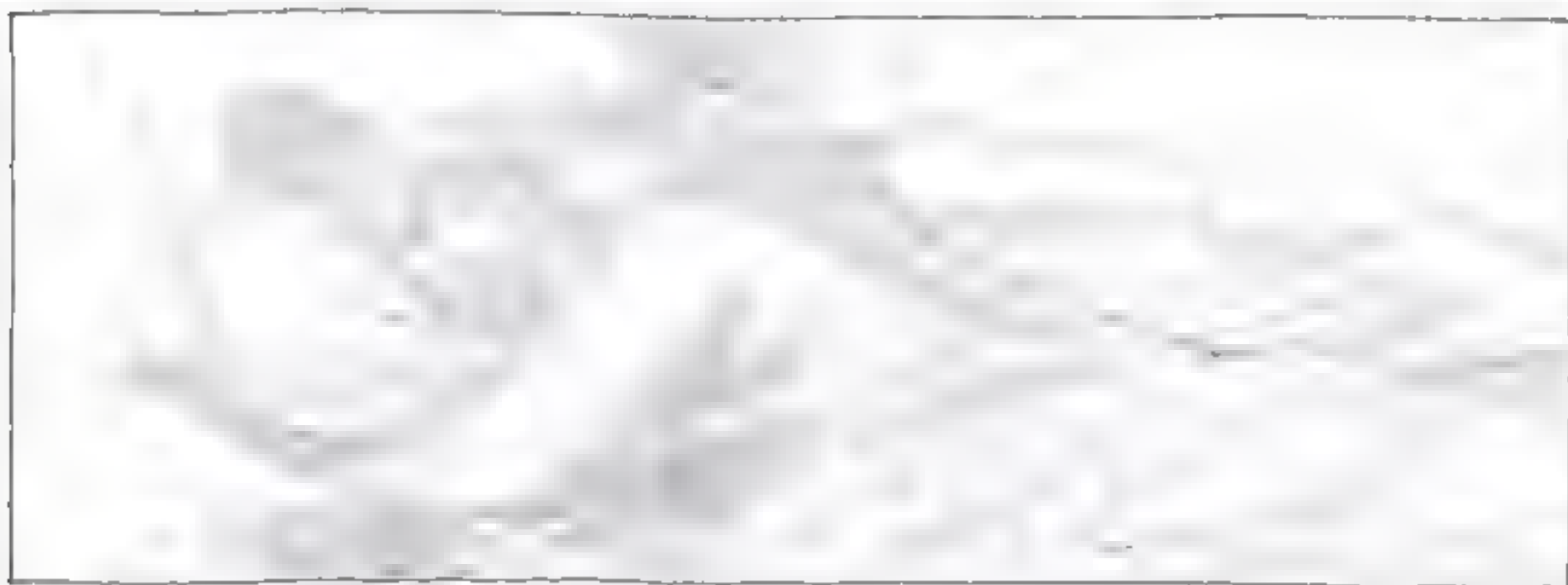


Eric: Yeah, it's funny because as much as I enjoyed Tony's work on the book and as much as I've enjoyed stuff he's done since, Charlie really does have an extra something that he brings to the stuff. Also, he's a machine. There aren't a lot of artists in comics these days who can say they're drawn 109 issues of a comic book. I mean actually, it's like him and Mark Bagley, I guess.

Robert: Erik Larsen. Yeah, there's some guys floating around. For *The Walking Dead* to be *The Walking Dead*, there's a lot of story to tell there. I think if we were sitting here ten years later on #40 or #50... and there are books like *Hellboy* and other series that have been around longer that have fewer issues out.

Eric: *Hellboy* has been around for 20 years. That book has been around twice as long as *The Walking Dead* and there aren't even half as many issues.

Robert: Yeah, I mean that's an epic story. Honestly, it's better than *The Walking Dead* in almost every way, so I don't want to seem like I'm comparing it to *Hellboy* in any kind of negative way, but I just don't feel like my story would work or be as cool if we weren't putting the book out 12 issues a year and we weren't telling these long, expansive stories. I got to this book do for 60 years instead of 30 years? That would be upsetting to me. I don't have 60 years in me, come on.



Eric: [laughter] You just started this thing where you're going to be doing two issues a month, and you've got Stefano Gaudiano inking Charlie and you sent over Charlie's pencils for the issue. To me, that was a real revelation because Charlie's pencils are almost better than his finished work.

Robert: *There's a softness to them and there's a depth to them that I definitely think just working in pencil he is able to bring different things to the page. It's really cool just how different some of that art looks when he's just penciling. I think it's turning out really great.*

Eric: Stefano's inks have been really cool, too. There are certain things where I look at it and I'm like, "Wow, that is totally different from the way Charlie does that." But it's also totally cool.

Robert: *He's okay. But no, all joking aside, you know, Stefano's really bringing a new look to the book. But I don't mean it's changing things in a way that it'll actually be jarring. I just think it's adding a new flavor, a new element. But I feel like it's additive. It's not different as much as it is extra. I know the people are*

really gonna respond well to the art in this arc.

Eric: Yeah, I don't think it's that much different at all either. There's actually probably a lot of people who are like, "What? I don't see any difference at all."

Robert: [laughter] Sure.

Eric: When you introduce a character into the book, do you tell Charlie what you want the guy to look like in terms of like a design? Or does the guy shows up on the page?

Robert: *No, I usually give him a sense. Thought I don't have any recollection of giving him any direction on the Governor in particular. I think I may have said that he would have a mustache, but I'm pretty sure that the look of the Governor was just Charlie. But for a character like Negan, I gave him specifics on what I wanted him to look like. I gave him an actor who I will not name, just in case that guy later wants to be cast in the show and we can't. That could be problematic.*

I sent Charlie some photos of George

Clinton because I thought that George Clinton is a pretty interesting character. So I wanted to kind of bring that kind of eclectic character into the book.

Eric: He is theatrical looking.

Robert: Yeah, yeah, definitely. That's what I was going for with the Ezekiel character, but for Jesus I was like, "He's got hair and beard or whatever." But you know, Charlie adds a great deal to things and definitely brings a cool flavor to all the characters that keeps it really consistent.



Eric: Is there anything you've done on the book at any point over the last ten years that you've regretted?

Robert: I regret cutting Rick's hand off. I mean I do and I don't. I don't because I like that it was a decision that I made that I had to live with. I like that it was very unexpected and I like that it set up the Governor in a very cool way and really kind of showed him, right out of the gate, as being sadistic and everything. I think that all worked out pretty great. I don't like that it's a giant pain in the ass.

I'm constantly having to rewrite scenes because I'll forget. I'll write that Rick puts on a shirt, which you can do with one hand but I'm picturing him with two hands. Or Rick will lift up something that he can't really lift with one hand. In #51, I wrote a scene of Rick opening a can with a can opener. And I was like, "Yeah, that's a two-handed operation, buddy. That's not gonna fuckin' work." So I had to rewrite that scene so that he handed it to Carl and has Carl open it. But that shows how pathetic Rick is after having lost the prison and it actually adds to the scene. So I shouldn't say that I regret it. But I will say that it is a pain in the ass.

Eric: Charlie has told me, too, and I think you mentioned it, that he will also frequently draw the wrong hand chopped off. Like the stump will be in the wrong place or sometimes he will just draw both hands.



Robert: Yeah, we've had to flip hands a few times. We've had to have him redraw panels a few times. He'll draw Rick with two hands. He'll draw the stump on the right side. Sometimes Cliff (Rathburn) has to fix it. Sometimes Charlie will have

to redraw it. Charlie actually hasn't made that goof in a while. Either that or I'm not catching them anymore. I know it has made it to print a couple of times, but yeah, that's a hard one to keep track of. Every now and then Charlie slips up and draws a hand which is silly because it's really just more work for him. You would think that he would key into the fact that it's less drawing and he would remember. But the guy's a hard worker.

Eric: So with ten years under your belt at this point, and I know you always say that you want to write the book as long as you have ideas for it, and you would be happy writing it for the rest of your life, but looking forward, where do you want to see the book in the next ten years?

Robert: Well, my goal right now is for the book to outlive the show. That's the thing that really excites me. The show is really cool. I love working on the show. I don't want the show to ever end. But I really like the idea of the show running its course, coming up with a very cool, satisfactory ending for the show, and then the comic continuing to tell stories and continuing to dig deeper in this world and move forward. I think that would be a really fun place to get to. The show is doing really well so that might take a while. Maybe the show will outlive the comic and that'll be annoying.

But I see it going for a good long while. Interestingly enough, I know how the book ends. I've always had a rough idea of how the book wraps up. But I've come up with the scenes that I think together actually ends the series. I'm really excited about getting to those. So I'm not going to speed things up at all, but now that I have the ending mapped out, it helps me tell more stories and gives me a better idea of what's going on in the book and what's gonna continue to go on in the book for years to come.

But I have to never tell anyone about that ending because if anyone on the TV show finds out what that ending is, they might put it in the TV show before it appears in the comic and that would be extremely frustrating to me. So that's a fun game that I have to play. I'm going to be in the writer's room on the final season of the show and it'll be like, "So how do we end this?" And

I'm gonna go, "Uh, I don't know." And then as they're coming up with ideas, I'm gonna have to be like, "No, no, not bad, that's a great idea, but it's like this unspoken ending that I have for the comic that I can't tell you about."

You have to not do that. That's gonna be somewhat awkward, but it'll be worth it in the end. So that's gonna be pretty exciting. I think about the end now and maybe it'll be #360 or maybe it'll be #500, but there's an end in sight to a certain extent, which I don't want to scare people because I do think this book will go for a good long time.

Eric: I don't think it scares people. I think knowing that whoever's writing the story has an endpoint in mind, actually gives readers more confidence that they're not just being led down the garden path every month.

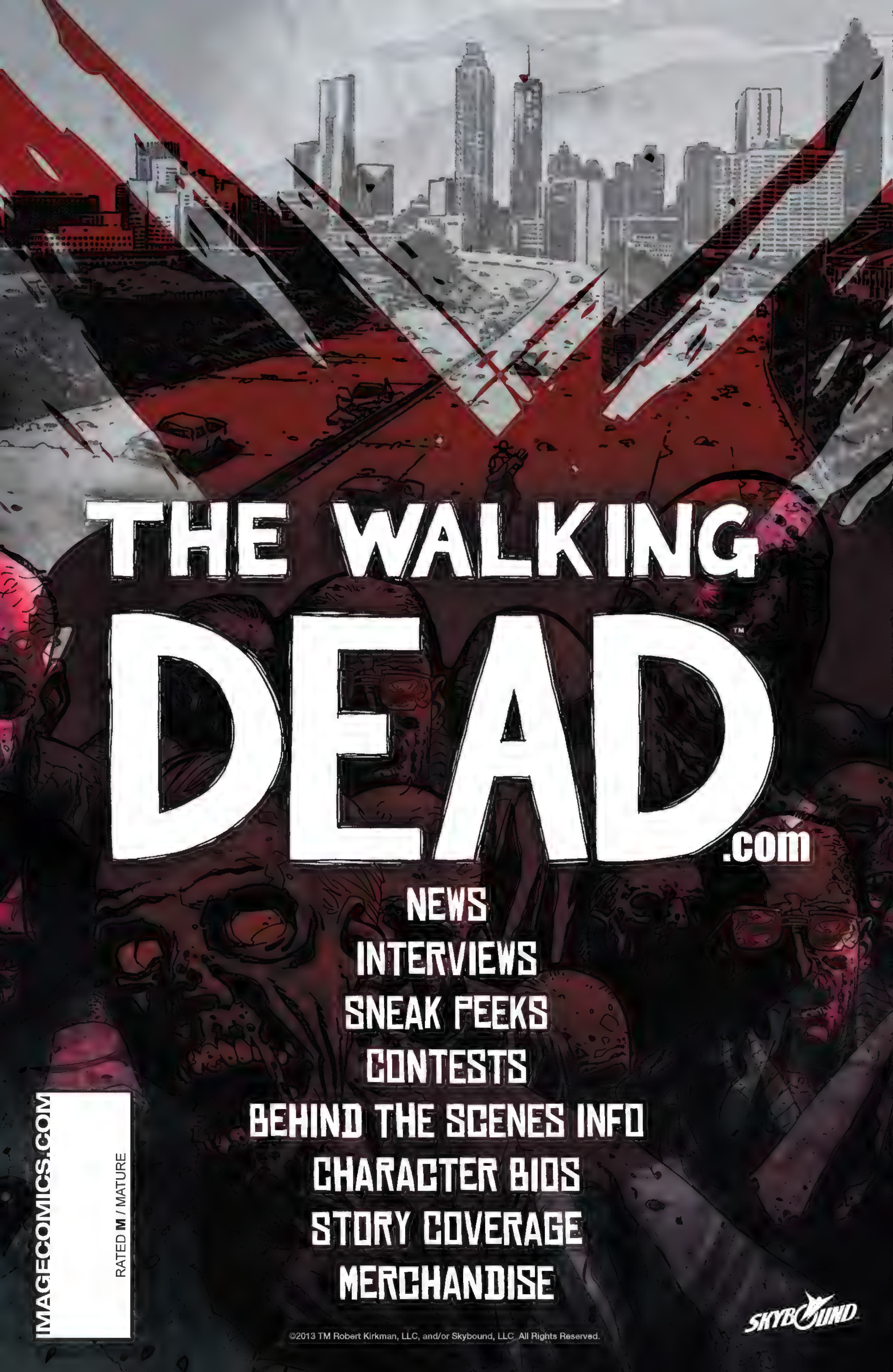
Robert: I don't want anyone to think that I'm just spinning my wheels. There's definitely an end in sight. It's just many, many years away. But yeah, I'll hopefully be rambling on in an interview with you ten years from now in our 20th anniversary special where we reprint the second issue in full color. So I'll look forward to that.

Eric: Well, I tell you, it's been a pretty awesome ten years. I always tell people that one of my favorite parts of this job is being able to read really cool books before anybody else sees them. It's kind of like having a backstage pass. It's been pretty awesome watching how the book has developed over this time.

Robert: Hopefully I won't let you down in the near future.

Eric: So far there hasn't been any hint that that would be a problem.

Robert: I'll do my best.



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LETTER HACKS

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Well... how about that, A happy ending! Thanks for picking up the second issue. I hope you guys and gals out there are liking what we're doing here. I'm glad to say that if you are... you're not the only ones. Aside from getting a favorable review on the fourth rail (www.thefourthrail.com) by Randy Lander retailers are telling me that they've sold out of their initial orders and in some cases even their overshipped copies. The thing about it is... I'm writing this the day after issue 1 shipped to stores... so we're doing pretty well. In fact... I have enough mail already to do a letters column in issue two, which doesn't happen very often. So... Chris Piers... take it away!

Tony/Robert,

I'm impressed. I've been reading each of your collaborations from Battle Pope through Brit, Beastman and now Walking Dead. And I am not speaking lightly when I say that this is my favorite piece of work from either of you. When you mention in your introduction at the back of issue 1, Robert, that this is your most serious piece of work, well, I've read everything you've put out and I agree. I'm very, very impressed.

Tony's artwork in the book is beyond reproach. I love the greytone he's given the work. It may be black and white but it's got depth. Depth in the composition too. The long shots Tony chooses come across as so empty and desolate. When I read this book, I get the feeling that it's the quietest autumn ever. It certainly helps that the trees are all bare. This is a comic where the world itself is dying.

The expressions and body language Tony breathes into Rick Grimes really helps to make him one of the most down-to-earth and believable characters you guys have dealt with. And while I love zombies, I'm equally impressed with the restraint with which you use them. It's not quite a post-apocalyptic story it seems, so much as one character's journey in a killer virus type of story. Or maybe it will be an odyssey for Rick? A journey that takes him to the farthest point from home possible, in which he endures multiple trials before he is finally able to return? Everything in this first issue set the stage for something epic like that. I have faith, having read each of your work that you can follow through on something like that.

I wish you luck and I hope you guys are around for a long time to come on this title. Oh, and for anyone who suggests THE WRITING DEAD for a letter column, you deserve to be eaten by a zombie. Letter Hacks is a far superior choice!

-Chris Piers

"Letter Hacks" it is. Thanks Chris, glad to see you're on board for this one... just how many books a month do you buy anyway? I'm glad you noticed the seriousness of this book. Most people might look at this and see gore and monsters and write it off as a "horror" book but I think this is the closest I will ever get to a real heartfelt, quiet, personal story. I take this genre very seriously... I love it for everything it is. I just hope it's coming through in the book.

Robert Kirkman

I've never sent an e-mail to praise a comic book, but after reading the first issue, I just had to write and tell you how much I enjoyed the book. It's great to see an emotionally involved zombie story. I haven't read or seen anything like this in years, so it's refreshing to see a book on this topic that not completely splattered in blood and also looks at the strong emotion involved in such a story, being a fan of the Romero films myself. I look forward to every issue after this and hope to see this book around for a while.

-Mike S.

You and me both pal. I'd like to be finishing up issue 14 around this time next year and I think Tony feels the same way. We're really enjoying this romp into realism (heh) and hope to follow this Zombie Apocalypse all the way to the end. Which means we'll be doing this book for YEARS... as long as the sales don't drop to nothing.

The letter in the back of issue #1 said you wanted people to let you know what they think...and the words in, you rock for putting out a zombie comic. To pay tribute to the classic Arrow comics I see you have followed suit with B&W illustrations. I could not ask for anything more. I thought this was just going to be another new comic Wednesday, and then I get an uber-surprise like this. I am glad to hear that you plan on making the series lengthily and that you want to pull in social aspects like Romero stories. Issue #1 had a good mix of everything. Please keep this series alive and kicking,

I am excited to follow Rick in his endeavors. The illustration is fantastic as well. When I flipped the page to when Rick opens the hospital cafeteria door and finds all of the zombies, my jaw dropped a bit...a perfect depiction of zombie apocalypse. And for gore to hit you in B&W means everything is perfect. I may be telling you something you already know, but a good reference for your comic would be the "Zombie Survival Guide" by Max Brooks. It just hit the stands a month or so ago, despite the humor angle, it is a complete culmination of zombie knowledge.

To sum it up, you have an extremely excited and anxious follower of your new comic. I am looking forward to issue #2 and beyond.

Thank you!!
Tom Ales

I wouldn't want to do this book in color. I'm not familiar with "Arrow comics" (anyone care to fill me in?) but I'm a HUGE fan of Night of the Living Dead and to me... this stuff just works better in black and white. Have you SEEN the zombies in Dawn of the Dead? YEESH they look AWFUL. No matter how GREAT that movie is... those zombies just SUCK... that's all there is to it. Black and White is where it's at for this stuff... it just works better in my mind.

Just read through my copy of Walking Dead #1 and I was VERY impressed.

When the characters are normal folks like you and I, the stakes are higher. Real people dealing with an unreal situation is something you can empathize with. When you do that, it creates it's own tension when they get in danger. The attack in the stairwell was great example- Rick didn't even know how much danger he was in when he almost got bitten. That was a wonderful scene.

If I may make a suggestion or two, I would like to offer this up.

1. Please don't reveal what started it all. The mystery of not knowing is wonderful. The living is where the story is, not the dead.

2. No intelligent zombies. That's silly.

Thank you! Please keep up the good work.

He who is Q

Don't worry... we're not going to have any intelligent zombies any time soon... or ever... I mean, what's the point? Intelligent zombies are worse than aquafresh blue zombies. Glad you enjoy the book, Q... lay off Picard for a little bit. The guy's getting old.

Man, I just read The Walking Dead and it's fantastic! The art is awesome and it's nice to see Kirkman stretch his pen into more serious ink. The best zombie stories are always about a hell of a lot more than zombies and this seems to be heading in that direction. Nice one guys.

Rick

www.teenagers-from-mars.com

Glad you enjoyed it Rick, this book is definitely about a hell of a lot more than zombies... I think you'll enjoy it more as it goes along. On a side note... anyone out there that hasn't been buying TEENAGERS FROM MARS is really missing out. It's a great indy book with a great story and great art and I highly recommend it.

Hey guys,

First off, I just wanna say what an amazing book you blokes have here. It's a breath of fresh air compared to the other titles around. I love the whole concept of the post apocalypse survivalist theme, totally cool stuff. Your book reminds me of the UK film 28 Days Later, which I saw recently here in Australia and absolutely enjoyed.

I hate to be a nitpicker, but there's one thing that nags at me about the first issue. When Rick wakes up in hospital, he uses the elevator. Now with all these zombies running around and most of the citizenry having fled to the big cities. Who's running the power stations? It also happens again when Rick, Morgan Jones and his son Duane visit the police station and Rick turns on the lights in the office.

All in all, I reckon it's a great comic with a likeable hero character. If you fellas are in for the long haul, then count me in coz I really wanna see what happens on Rick's journey. Keep up the good work.

- James

Places like police stations and hospitals would have back up generators and I'm thinking for the most part that power would remain available until something went wrong. It's not like there's a hamster in a wheel that needs to be fed every day. For the most part people at power stations are just keeping things in working order. So while power is out in MOST places... there are places that are still juiced up. Yeah... 28 days later... sigh... I wish that damn movie had never been made. As much as I LOVE it... that opening sequence was totally "mind-stolen" from me. I think you'll agree that as the book goes on it will have almost nothing in common with that movie.

Well, that's all for now folks. I hope you'll be back here next month when things get REALLY interesting. Until then... TELL YOUR FRIENDS.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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I realize I'm starting to sound like a broken record but as I type this I just found out today that our sales for issue 7 shot up another 2000 copies. That's just unheard of in today's market, especially for a black and white book... so thanks for the continued support people. We really appreciate it.

Speaking of appreciating I'd like to take this time to thank Cliff Rathburn for coming in at the last minute and pitching in on the gray tones for this issue. Thanks Cliff... you did a swell job!!

Now, onto the mail.

Misters Moore and Kirkman,

On a Wednesday at the Isotope I'm always busy as fucking hell, I spend every minute of my day entertaining a big group of crazy-cool customers, talking comics, and (of course) pimping comic books. Don't get me wrong, Wednesdays are my favorite day of the week, I really love the high energy crowd and the manic party atmosphere that we have every week, but I rarely get a chance to check out the latest wares until the doors are locked and the lights are off.

But with WALKING DEAD #4 in the store you know I had to take some time out of my day to read that sucker, and good lord can you imagine my shock to see my dead and rotting self laying there in a big pile of bodies?!? Now I certainly consider it quite an honor to be dead in one of my favorite books and you know it absolutely made my day! You guys are just too good to me.

So I thought I'd also take a little more time out of my Wednesday to say thanks for the great surprise... and for making such a kick ass comic book. Keep up the terrific work!

James Sime
Isotope - the comic book lounge
San Francisco
<http://www.isotopecomics.com>

James Sime ladies and gentlemen! James, you were one of the first people I spotted that were talking this book up and I can't help but think you've had a hand in its success. So to thank you... I got Tony to draw you all dead and rotting. It was his idea to have your guts all hanging out though... so thank him for that. Keep up the good work, man... it's good to know that people are out there busting their ass to sell these things.

Hey guys,

Been reading the series since the 3rd issue... found #1 so all I'm missing is #2. At any rate I don't buy many single issues of anything, but you've pulled off a very convincing tale about zombies.

This is great.
Can't wait for the trades. Well, everything that can

be said has already been said, so I'll just end with keep up the good work!

B. Alex Thompson

You'll be glad to know that a second printing of issue 2 should have hit shelves sometime around issue 5 making it to stores. A lot of people were complaining about missing issue 2. If you missed out on the second printing the TPB should be out about a month after this issue.

I'm going to give you another reason why The Walking Dead is one of the best books on the market now; it's going to bring in new comic readers.

2004 is going to be a HUGE year for zombie fans. The Dawn of the Dead remake and the Resident Evil Sequel will not only thrill fans of this unique horror creation, but we will see much new blood brought into the zombie loving fold. This is why the whole of the comic community should get behind The Walking Dead. An amazingly accessible book with gruesome black and white pencils that will get anyone who appreciates cinematic storytelling coming back for more, this book has it all!

Hat's off to you taking the time to kill potential fanboy Internet backlash with your explanation of the price of the upcoming trade paperback. The catch 22 situation with those who buy trades only is definitely a hot spot in comic circles of late, and it's good to see a creator giving his two cents on this subject. I find myself on both sides of the issue often but I tend to buy creator owned books monthly as oppose to trades. Your book has entered into my exclusive list of comics that I buy in trade as well as monthly now because after reading Letter Hacks I know you are creators who deserve as much as I can give. The real reason is that I don't want to let my non-comic reading friends borrow my issues when I make my pitch for them to pick up this series...and join the growing ranks of comic book fandom.

P.S. Have you read Max Brook's "The Zombie Survival Guide"?

- Nick Borelli,

I've got a copy of the survival guide, but haven't read it yet, someday though. Nothing would make me happier than knowing I got just ONE guy to starting reading comics because of his (or her) love of Zombie flicks. Let's hope you're right... this industry could use a few more people addicted to these thin little picture books.

Hey guys-

I've never written to a comic book before, but after reading the letter column to issue 4, I realized you guys are missing an essential part of the typical letter column. So, here goes...

"Man, I hate this book! You guys suck! You're ruining Rick's life, not to mention Lori's! I can't believe Image is allowing you guys to breathe, let alone publish! Eat \$*# and die, mother#)^#@&^s!"

Ok, now that you've gotten a negative letter, everything'll work out fine!

Seriously, love the book! I'm a Manager of a comic book store (Golden Apple II in Northridge) and I have been promoting your book shamelessly since #1! Just wondering if you guys ever make it to Southern Cali? If so, I would LOVE to have you at my shop for a signing! Maybe the San Diego Con (or Wizard's Long Beach shin-dig in March)?

Well, keep up the good work and, hey, one other thing:

If Image ever asks you to do a variant cover (or a holofoil, or a red foil, or a...well, you get the picture), use that ax Rick carries around and start chopping!

Sincerely,

Warren Jaycox

I have variants, if I can help it... I hope to never do a book that has variant covers. It just bugs me having different looking copies of the SAME book... but that's just me. So no worries on the variant cover thing. If I'm ever in California again, I'll look you up. I'd personally love to do a signing. Might even drag Tony along if he behaves. Keep in touch, and thanks for the support. Oh, and I printed a negative letter in issue 5, so your email really just hurts my feelings, asshole.

Robert & Tony,

I just had the pure enjoyment of reading Walking Dead 1-3(#4 is waiting in my hold box at the comic store). I don't think there has been a better comic in this genre in a long time. There have been quite a few "horror" comics coming out in the last two years, but nothing this well written or this well drawn. This is the best thing Image has released since Midnight Nation. In a way, it makes me nostalgic for the days when Vince Locke was doing Dead World, it gives me that excited(I feel like I'm fourteen again) feeling every time a new issue comes out. Do you remember Dead World? I hope I'm reading this comic for a long, long time! Keep up the great work and I'll keep telling my customers at the comic store that they need this comic more than food, air, & water.

Thanks for not letting a zombie fan down.

David Richardson

I think I'm going to start running a FAQ section at the top of every letters column that says "Dead World and Max Brooks Zombie Survival Guide have been purchased thanks to recommendations in letter hacks, but the creators have yet to find time to read them." I got some Dead World stuff on Ebay and I'll try to get to it soon. It's just... I've got issues of X-men to read, people!!

Hi

Wow is all I can say about The Walking Dead. This is one of the best comics out there. Robert catches the mood of the great Zombie movies perfectly. I'm really waiting to see the confrontation between Rick and Shane me thinks one of the Walking Dead.

Great Stuff Great Job
Paul Abblitt.

What makes you think there's a confrontation coming up between Shane and Rick? I'll tell you right now... NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN. Those guys are FRIENDS. Haven't you been paying attention?

My friend Mike turned me on to your book and boy am I glad he did. It's been a good 5 years since I have found myself enthralled with a title enough that I actually visit my local comic store and nag them if the next issue is in yet. I just got finished reading number 4 and you have treated the genre of zombie stories better than any one else I have seen in print. I have enjoyed how the story has evolved and that you have left the reader in the dark as to the origins of the zombie plague just as the main character Rick is.

As a fan of the Romero trilogy, I always felt that the zombies were incidental to the story and the real power of the tale was how ordinary people react to mortal danger and the collapse of society as they know it. I'm very interested to see how the band of survivors at the camp react when they realize that help isn't coming, and that traditional morality has no role in the world that they find themselves in.

Keep up the good work.

p.s. I love the nod to Duane Jones (the name of the actor who played Ben in the original Night of the Living Dead, may he rest in peace.) in issue #1, keep the fan boy references coming!

Eric R. Weiss

Heh... fan boy references will be slipped in as much as I can. I'm trying to keep you guys happy. I'm glad you like my approach Eric. I really respect zombie horror as a genre and I'm just out to do the most interesting tale I can no matter what. I hope most of you didn't notice but this issue has NO zombies in it. That's going to happen from time to time (not too often though, so don't worry). "The Walking Dead" does NOT refer to the zombies in this book.

Walking

Hey man this is a piece of great work you got here. Man I just can't say how much I like this story (I like this story!) Well I guess you guys get that a lot. Here's my scoreboard:

Art 10.0
Plot 10.0
Color 10.0

You scored 100.0 points (its supposed to be 30.0pts but I like this book.) One question: How about making toys of your characters? Try asking Todd Mcfarlane.

Drayco

Whoa!! We got a 10 for color and there ISN'T ANY!! We kick ASS!!! Oh, and Todd... you listening? I'm ready for toys when you are!

Dudes I read your letter at the end of number 1. I whole heartedly agree, thank you for this
Please make more

Crazyphysicist

We'll try, we're no Doritos but I'll see what we can do.

Dear Robert & Tony—

I just got issue #4 a couple of days ago, and have probably read it seven or eight times since.

I have to say, with this issue your title has gone from being a comic I'm thrilled reading, as something bursting with promise, to a title that is really starting to deliver on that promise.

And when it gets to showing your cards in a story, delivering on the promise you've made when you say, "Come here, I have a story to tell," that's usually when things get disappointing...

I almost don't know where to start... On the zombie side, I love the addition to the lore (which you thankfully seem to be following pretty closely according to the Philadelphia model) this issue brings. I, myself, have wondered what keeps zombies from attacking each other willy-nilly, unerringly honing in on the living. I found your answer very satisfying, but I found your use of it fucking stunning. The half-splash of the zombies jammed up against the tank was thrilling, and getting to move among a throng of the undead with our heroes, undetected, was all the things you want from a horror experience: creepy, exciting, nerve-wracking. The thing is, those of us who love the zombies are very familiar with the tropes: flesh eating, the mob, artillery, infection and half-measures, the transfiguration of those closest to us into brainless monsters... all that. But that walk through zombie infested Atlanta felt like something I'd never seen before, and it was really exciting.

And that's secondary to what I'm enjoying most in *The Walking Dead*, which is the human drama — watching our heroes deal emotionally and practically to a world that's been overrun, hostile and desolate. A world which, I might add, is easier and easier to imagine coming to be with each passing year. I was very enthusiastic to read your manifesto about the title's intended goals. It put me in mind of some of my favorite Japanese comics, where the story unfolds slowly, accruing character as it goes, almost closer to the pace of life than a novel, even. I think you're succeeding quite well there, and I thank you for it.

I also think you're getting the mix of drama to action just right. Good job.

I have a technical question for Tony. Do you do your "coloring" with a computer? Or are you working the greys more traditionally, by hand and stuff?

Greyscale comics generally aren't my thing, I like stark black and white or lush colors. But I agree with you guys, black and white, in the more cinematic palette, is absolutely appropriate for this. Heightens it, in fact. Maybe because we associate black and white photography with an era before modern special effects, and of course contemporary films inform our take on visual entertainments across mediums. So, black and white equals more real, somehow. Just a little theory I'm working up, I don't know. Without question it's great for the compositions. Obviously you're changing my thinking about this comics-in-greys situation. I love your drawing style, by the way. I aspire to developing something similar. Great zombies, too.

Oh, one last thing. Rick's family is alive. And he found 'em. I wasn't expecting that angle. Boy, how's about having something to lose, right? Great stuff. Issue #4's "terrible revelation" at the end is not about cars going over cliffs, nor our heroes surrounded (no, you gave us that with the peek at Issue #5's cover — dizzy with anticipation, here), but more devastating, in fact. The human drama. Fantastic.

Keep up the good work, sirs. Here's to a long, interesting run.

Thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Letters like these make it all worthwhile. We sit in our rooms all alone doing the best work we can, hoping people get it... and to find that you (and most people) are responding to this book so

favorably is really something special. I can't that you (and guys like you) enough. You rock. Tony does the tones on the computer, it's all done in Photoshop.

Dear *Walking Dead*:
I had to take a breather from watching USA Channel's true dramatic

stories *DC Sniper: 23 Days of Fear* and *The Perfect Husband: The Laci Peterson Story*, to read *The Walking Dead* #3! Tonight I went from dramatic reality of watching the above mentioned movies to reading a story that would make George Romero shiver in his boots! The grisly scene of seeing that dead man chomping down on a deer gave me the heebie

jeebies. Even though this comic book is done in black and white, the artwork is very realistic. The hatchet beheading left me speechless. This is the best horror comic book on the market today. I love the outdoorsy tone of the story and I will not be going out camping for a long time. What *Jaws* did for swimmers, this comic book does for people who love the woods and outdoors. It's time to stay in the house, turn on all the lights before reading this comic book again! A job well done! I am an Office Manager for a government political job (my real job) here in Sacramento, California and have actually seen Vice President Dick Cheney, shook hands with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Black Panther Bill Jennings. At times my own reality is surreal and it's nice to take a break from the political madness. Avoiding the media swarms, like CNN News trucks parked in front of our building during the Recall Gray Davis campaign and so on. I take my break from my own surreal reality and step into a world that is filled with horror and terror and the best way to do that is by reading your comic book! I give you a cordial bow and salute you for a comic book that is superior in everyway! I will be going to Moscow, Russia on vacation in April and I will be bringing your comic book with me, to re-read on the long flight over there.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

There was a Black Panther before T'Challa? What haven't I heard of this?! Do I smell a no-prize? Glad you like the book, Paul.

Letter Hacks:

Dammit this series rocks. I really tensed up when they went into the city. The dialogue comes across very well between everyone, and the drama between Lori and Shane keeps getting better. Tony's art makes everything oh so juicy, I'm loving it. Thanks, and keep up the great work!

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

No more McDonald's slogans in letters please, Ryan. Unless it's "Food, Folks, and Fun." That one was the best. Anyone ever try to order the "Folks" and "Fun?" We should have sued those assholes.

Hey I just wanted to take a minute to write and say what an excellent book y'all have. As of late there are a lot more horror comics on the rack and you guys have managed to put out one of the best. The story and the art are always great. The story is well developed as well as the characters, which is sometimes difficult in any zombie story, 'cause unlike other monsters zombies don't have any character traits like vampires and werewolves, they're kinda like a force of nature if you will. So you have to really invest in and like the characters to keep interested with the story, even though some characters are pretty much zombie food. Moving on to the art, Tony gives stark and vivid images that are gorgeous (please keep it black and white). The attention to detail on the zombies is hardcore and should make any horror fan happy. Overall you have one of the best books on the market not just in horror comics but comics in general.

Thanks and keep up the good work,
Matthew G.

Didn't you hear? Black and White is the new color! We're at the front of a craze wave that's going to be sweeping the world by storm. Black and White 4-ever!!

Dear LetterHacks,

Wow. Issue four was amazing. This continued quality just keeps elevating the overall book. But issue four was something special.

Tony's art has been complimented by myself and others many times but man, does he also know how to make a cover. Each cover to Walking Dead is brilliant and makes me want to rip open the book and figure out what scene I'm looking at. He creates tension simply with his composition and layout. For covers today, it's up there with 100 Bullets (Dave Johnson) and other books with good covers like Losers, Y the Last Man and Fables. Impressive as hell.

But what I liked most about this was the stink factor. Yeah. When Robert introduced the idea that zombies don't attack each other due to a rudimentary sense of smell, I was like, "Great!" Any explanation will do but it's never really covered as to why zombies don't attack one another. But it got better. You just knew that walking into the middle of the zombie-infested city was not Rick's best idea. At least not his most well-thought-out. And it was like a time bomb, waiting for the plan to fall apart. And sure enough, you ratcheted that tension up and had it all go to pieces at the worst possible time.

Good job.

It really blows my mind that you write light-hearted stuff like Tales of the Realm and Invincible and then turn around and put out some mature, tense, character-driven work like Walking Dead. Keep exploring that range, man.

Thanks for another terrific issue,
Chris Piers

Thanks for the kind words, Piers. This year... I'm sending you a Christmas card... with a little something extra.

Just wanted to compliment you on "The Walking Dead." It's the best comic I've ever read. No joke. Great work on the #4's cover. When is #5 coming out? The long wait has been a killer. Keep up the great work.

-Tristan

Issue 5 will be out... a month ago by the time you read this. Sorry I couldn't get back to you sooner. This printing schedule is a mess.

Kirkman,

About time someone decided to canonize zombie lore! All bodies of the recently deceased get up and kill - the people they kill get up and kill. They do not require food or sustenance; they are driven by hunger as an instinct. Moreover, they do not run, speak, or use weapons! I'm glad that others like the Romero zombie world. Nobody I know even knew there were two sequels to Night of the Living Dead. Dawn of the Dead is my favorite movie. Why didn't I know this book was out when it started?!? I just found issue #2 on the shelf at my local comic shop after reading about it some time ago on NEWSARAMA.

Following Romero's formula is a recipe for success. Night shows the horror.

Dawn of the Dead establishes how and who comes back. Day gives the facts about how they walk around (while keeping the exact cause a mystery - it's also good that Romero distanced himself from the whole Venus probe in the 90s remake). More important than the facts on zombies is the social commentary that basically shows that man is not better than those walking corpses outside, killing each other and fighting while we should be uniting. Zombies do not kill each other! Everybody go buy the new Day of the Dead 2 disc DVD and pick up Dawn as soon as it comes out.

Love the book. Our hero finding his family was great. It was so expected it became unexpected and therefore a pleasant surprise. Keep up the good work!

Now loyal fan,
Chris Pitts,

Glad you like the book Chris, thanks man. Can someone confirm this even-better-than-the-current-Dawn-DVD-release version of the movie that's coming out in October. I'm hearing 5 discs and to be honest... it's making my heart skip a beat. I'd rather not buy this one coming out in March if I don't have to.

Walking Dead staff,

Just wanted to say that I am really enjoying The Walking Dead. I hadn't bought a comic book in probably 5 years. I stopped in a store the other day just to browse. It was there that I saw The Walking Dead, Issue #1. Being a huge fan of Romero's zombie trilogy (esp. Dawn) as well as 28 Days and Zombi, I was curious. I gotta say, you guys have really done an excellent job with the book. I was able to find Issue 3 in another store. I've seen #'s 2 and 4 on Ebay. Looking forward to picking them up as well. Keep up the great work and story. Being a zombie fan myself, there are so few quality zombie products out there, be it movies, books, etc. I truly hope this is a long lasting series.

Thanks,
Dave

With sales figures what they are I can guarantee we'll be around for a while. Oh and Dave... we almost went an ENTIRE letters column without mentioning 28 Days Later and then you had to go fuck that up. Thanks, man! At least it wasn't in reference to the opening scene of issue 1... that at least, is a step in the right direction.

And with that I bring another massive letters column to a close. Thanks for writing in, people. You know everyone here at The Walking Dead central loves you. Keep sending that email!!

See you next month.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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OR

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Welcome to issue 8. Things are running smoothly here. Numbers are STILL on the rise, word of mouth is spreading... and we just got nominated for an Eisner (did I mention that last month?). Things are good.

Before we dive into the letters I want to give a shout out to Charlie and Cliff, you guys have gone above and beyond this issue. This book is looking fantastic. I absolutely couldn't be happier with how it's turned out. Keep up the good work!

Now that we've got that out of the way... let's dive into these letters.

Hey gang. I like your new book, it's the best zombie comic to come along in a while. It's the best kind of zombie story, one that shows a very human aspect at it's core. I'd put it up there with some of the other best zombie books; Deadworld ish's 1 to 16, plus the accompanying short stories that went with it. The Night of the Living Dead movie adaptation, (by Fantico I think, who, unfortunately, don't seem to exist anymore,) plus their Night of the Living Dead: London sequel. Dark Horse's Zombie World: Winter's Dregs, Tree of Death, and a couple others they did. Plus others I can't recall offhand now... Resident Evil comics were kind off cool, but lacked length, and good dialogue. There were some cool blood & guts, but if your dialogue sucks then you're screwed. In fact the dialogue in Resident Evil (games in particular) sucked ass until the novels and movie came out. Here are my fave zombie flix:

Dead Alive(I know it's ridiculous, but it's the bloodiest movie ever!)
Night of the living dead
Dawn of the Dead
Return of the Living Dead
Night of the Living Dead (remake)
Return of the Living Dead 3 (2 was a good story with good soundtrack/music, but stupid acting, whereas 3 had good acting, but shitty music. Go figure.)
Day of the Dead
Resident Evil (Although it's as much a bio-terror movie as a zombie movie.)
Dawn of the Dead (remake)
28 Days Later (even though the zombies aren't dead)
I can only imagine how cool Resident Evil: Apocalypse

is
going to be. You
guys are

doing great. I shall keep pace with your book.

Later, Misfit.
Rochester, NY

P.S. I also dig the Evil Dead trilogy, even though they're not exactly zombie flix. And, hopfully, it won't always be a trilogy. ;)

Zombie World: Winter Dregs was a great comic. I love Bob Fingerman's work. If any of you out there are over 18 you should check out Bob's "Minimum Wage" series. It was recently collected into a hardback titled "Beg the Question." It's an all around swell book that provides solid entertainment value page after page. I highly recommend it.

Hail,
When I saw the title The Walking Dead in the comic store, I jumped at it but when I saw it was in black and white I just put it back in the shelve but later I give it a try and a bought the third issue and I MUST APOLOGIZE for all I said about black and white artwork, It gives an more dramatic effect. Now I regret to had not buy the first and second issue...that's what I deserve maybe... But keep this good comic book and artwork like this, congrats again!

-Sputnik

Serves you right asshole! Didn't you hear? Black and white is the new color! On a side note, fellas... ladies... please sign your emails. If you do not... I will make up a name for you... like Sputnik here. Heh.

Greetings,
I have been reading this book since it came out and I was amazed at how impressive it looks. As a fan of zombie movies, I always love to see the reactions of the people in the movies and how they deal with such horrific situations. Movies like the Living Dead trilogy are to me the same as films like "The Possiedon Adventure," "The Towering Inferno" and "Earthquake." These movies show all have one terrific similarity: Drama. I

to say what a great job Mr. Moore has been doing in terms of art. The feel of the book reminds me of the original "Night of the Living Dead." This book is a constant reminder to cherish the things we still have and deal with whatever problems that may happen.

Thank you

Adam Langfelder

P.S.

Don't let this book get cancelled because I love it!!!!!!!

Thank GOD you told me Adam! This book was on the chopping block until I got this email. I mean... between Invincible, Brit, Captain America, and my Savage Dragon and SuperPatriot mini-series I was just getting a bit too busy for this book... but I'll stick it out, for you.

I picked up this book because my little brother told me not reading it was not a good idea. I just finished issue 6 and all I can say is wow. My ears are literally ringing, and I feel like I've just been shot. The true human emotion that you guys capture with this "zombie book" is amazing. I've never actually been able to hear a gunshot or any other sound effect by reading a comic book before, but when Carl shot Shane, it was one of the loudest things I've heard in my entire life. I know it's been said countless times before, but thanks for bringing us this book. It is the best thing I've read all year.

Nate Nease

Boulder, CO

Tell your little brother I said thanks, and that his check is in the mail.

Hey Kirkman!

Jesus! There's nothing bad to say. I recently finished obtaining all the current run of the walking dead series 1-6. And like any true college student, instead of writing my research paper, I didn't tonight to read all 6 of um. Amazing. Simply Amazing. Tony's Art, Your Writing,.. and it's good that it is black and white (makes the whole book more dramatic).

The art, man Tony is such a great artist. I love his stuff. Its so clean and detailed, and just so plain sometimes. I don't know how to explain it! It's amazing

The story. !!!!!. It is like watching a movie sometimes. A lot of your writing makes me think of just great cinematic moments. I think that's why people are just drawn to the 50 plus books you write J. And to it was not long ago when I saw that special mini-series (Superpatriot) that you and Cory did. Then I moved to Battle Pope, then Invincible, now Walking Dead. I hate you in fact. Why are you so good!

1. Thanks for not making the zombies run. That's one thing that's pissing me off with the new school of zombie movies. Thank

god you know what

would

also like

doing.

your

2. How's the new superpatriot coming along?

3. Since you write about a dozen books a month any way, how about this idea.... Marvel is going ape shit looking for people to replace their top talent because they're going to DC. Grant Morrison being one of them. So how about this... New X-men, Writer: Robert Kirkman, Artist: Dave Johnson

Hey then maybe you can be in the Wizard top ten writers. Hahah, I mean common, you should be #1Well until Image stops saying yes when you pitch a book, Make Mine Marv... err Kirkman!

Iggy Osorio

1. No shit... can you imagine how much this book would suck if I didn't know what I was doing?

2. It's coming along nicely. E.J. Su is doing a bang-up job. I think all the superhero fans that pick it up will enjoy it.

3. I've got no objections to that. Except for the Dave part... that guy's a lazy bastard!

Dear WDead Crew

I've written once before, but something new has come to my attention. I am a huge zombie fan, and your book is a wonderful addition to the zombie genre. But, this time I am going to skip the whole "zombies rule" stuff to say something totally different. You guys have really nailed it. Even without the zombies, this book is excellent. You have done a perfect mix of drama, suspense, horror, action, love and betrayal. I read a lot of comics, and I have to say, this truly is one of the best books on the market today. You grow to care and understand even the more minor characters in the book, and that is a hard act to pull off. I have been reading comics for over twenty years, and have seen few books that really flesh out a story like you guys do. I give you my word today, as long as this book is published, I will read it.

Nothing but praise
Arthur Marvin Jr.

P.S. Have you got a chance to check out "DeadWorld" yet?

I bought a TPB off ebay but I've yet to get around to reading it. I also can't figure out if it's the first story and I don't want to start in the middle! I flipped through it... it looks pretty cool.

Just wanted to drop a quick note to let you know I really enjoy your little zombie rag. The pacing is terrific, characterizations are intriguing and the art is just nifty.

I hope the book continues for quite awhile. You've got my support. Thanks for the great read!

Jeff

We'll

be
around for the long haul,
thanks to Adam's letter earlier. Seriously though...
with sales doing what they are, as long as the bot-
tom doesn't fall out of this horror craze we're living
through, we should be around a good long while. My
dream is to do at least 75 issues, but we'll see how we
do.

Robert and Tony:

You just put yourselves on the map with this one.

Incredible stuff.

Wow.

I loved it. I can't think of what else I could say. Mind
blown.

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

Can't argue with that. Thanks for the kind words
Ryan... though, as a I guy I remember from the Battle
Pope days I'm a little hurt that you didn't think we
were on the map before...

Walking Dead Crew,

I first spotted The Walking Dead in a Previews maga-
zine and the premise had me eager to try it out. I've
been on the train now for six issues and I don't intend
to get off any time soon. I usually pass up on Black
and Whites, but the Walking Dead has me taking a
second look. I'd love to see it in color sometime,
maybe volume 2?

I don't know what you have planned for these charac-
ters in the future, but I'd sure like to see what Arnold
Schwarzenegger looks like as a zombie. You wouldn't
have to do much for Maria, however.

Thanks,
Ashur Givargis
Elk Grove, CA

No color... EVER. No Schwarzenegger zombies.
Although, Maria Shriver has been in nearly every issue
thus far.

Hey guys,

Every issue of The Walking Dead I start reading I
always think that I know what's going on but by the
time I finish the issue I'm always stunned by what's
just happened. Issue 6 is a perfect example of this
those last three pages were so unexpected that I
couldn't take my eyes off the final page. After reread-
ing this issue I can see where everything in the past
couple of issues were leading up to this moment, this
confrontation but I never expected it to end this way.

Robert your pacing for the story has been spot on.
The way the events lead in from one sequence to
another is fantastic. Also the lettering and balloon

placement is done so well that it adds to the art in
heightening the story. The anger was jumping off of
the page when I was reading the book and the use of
"BLAM" behind Shane's head when he was shot really
showed the impact.

The story that's being told here goes way beyond what
I'd expect from a zombie comic

and that's
what I love about this book. The
characters seem so real we see the fear, hurt, and
anger in their eyes. This is one hell of an emotional
comic.

Congratulations in the bump up in sales, this book
deserves it.

Thanks for the great read,
George Gatewood

Thanks for all the compliments, George. Get your
brother to read it... and I'll mail you a check.

Dear sirs,

I must say that issue 6 was the best yet. It closed
the initial story arc perfectly, and made issue 5 seem
good to me. I have to admit, I thought you were slip-
ping with issue 5. It seemed very much as though you
were just "going through the motions", with typical
zombie action, typical interpersonal conflict, and typi-
cal post apocalyptic fireside chat. But issue 6 made
all of issue 5's events seem important, and though I'll
never LOVE issue 5, at least now I can like it.

Issues 1-4 were also outstanding, and I truly feel you
have done some of the best zombie storytelling.

I could try to explain more as to why I feel this way,
but I refuse.

What I refuse NOT to do is comment on your fre-
quent insistence that the title of your book "the walk-
ing dead" does not refer to the... (ahem) ZOMBIES
which occupy much of the thoughts and activities of
the characters there in.
(In Jesse Jackson voice) "This ridiculous. This is ludi-
crous. This is superfluous.

AND THISCANNOT STAND!"

I know you have the best intentions, but you are
being fool hardy. Take this hypothetical example as
an explanation of my point.

I have an idea for a new comic book. It's called "The
Killer Clowns of Washington". In the story, a bunch
of giant shoed, red afro wigged, face painted, tiny
car owning axe murders drive around Washington
trying to off war mongering politicians. Though
much of the story centers around the politicians
(most of whom are republicans), the tale is clearly
about the axe murdering Technicolor hobos who
threaten them and the affect they have on the
world. It's "Margret Thatcher's on the line, she says
that she can't help with the clown problem" and "
Is this fall out shelter clown proof?" and other such
banter in each and every issue.

My friend's, there could be no disputing the fact
that the clowns are the focal point of the story, and
the meaning of the title of the book. The story con-
tains killer clowns in Washington. The title is "the
killer clowns of Washington". No room for inter-
pretation there. Case closed. What you see is what
you get. Every issue, killer clowns are at the crux
of the tale. If there are no clowns in that issue, you
can sure as heck bet they'll be referred to. And the
whole thing takes place in Washington. So there
you have it.

Clowns of Washington.

The Killer

But then, in a wacky twist, I reveal in the letters column that the title of the book DOES NOT refer to the obviously killer clowns of Washington who are dressed as clowns and who kill people, but instead SOLELY REFERS to the war mongering politicians who play the victim to their homicidal yet comedic brutalizers. I say this because...

INFACT...

(wait for it)

... it's the war mongering politicians who are the real "KILLER CLOWNS OF WASHINGTON"!

Take that, reader of my comic book! You thought you knew what it was all about didn't you! But, noooooooo! You had it all wrong! Those killer clowns aren't THE killer clowns. It's those OTHER killer clowns are THE ACTUAL killer clowns!

Get it?

Hmmm, maybe I should state it more plainly.

It's fine to say that people robbed of their lives, their humanity, their sense of normalcy and security become soulless husks of their former selves, and therefore, could be described as "the walking dead". But it is not ok to say that people who can walk around but are really, truly not alive because they do not have a living body or capacity for brain function are NOT the walking dead.

To say that the walking dead are not the walking dead is just plain silly.

Those zombies in your comic book, they are the walking dead. They are walking, and they are dead. Hence, they are the walking dead. Now, those desperate and depressed living people in your comic book, they may be the METAPHORICAL walking dead, and you can say that the title of your comic refers to them all you want. But don't say your comic's title DOES NOT refer to the actual WALKING DEAD PEOPLE in your story, and instead refers ONLY to the TALKING ALIVE PEOPLE that are also in your story.

That gives me an idea. I'm going to start a comic book about a bunch of zombies who are dead and can't talk, and call it "the talking alive". There will also be a bunch of alive people who can talk in the story, but the title will most definitively not be in reference to them.

OK, I hope I've made my point.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I wouldn't have taken the time to write all that silly crap if your book weren't really affecting me.

And don't steal my idea.

Jonathan Holmes

PS. I haven't heard you sound off on the new DotD? You like?

Me

like.

Sure, they can run, but it's still a good movie, and I feel like it showed the interpersonal conflict in a apocalyptic lawless world just as well as the original did.

By the way, I heard that the title "Dawn of the Dead" is actually NOT in reference to the zombies in the story, and is in fact a reference to the dog in the film, whose name is Chips. Apparently, the message of the film is "If you have to hang out with an annoying red haired girl who calls you 'Chips' for a couple of days, you will feel like death has dawned upon you".

As you would expect, the movie was originally called "Dawn of the Dead Dog", but the test audiences were confused by the title, as they happily expected to see a 2 1/2 hour film detailing the adventures of a dead dog, and were disappointed by all the zombies and the not dead dog that they got instead.

For real. That's what I read on the Internet.

Sorry... I stopped reading your letter halfway through. Let me get this straight... you didn't like issue five? Man... I thought that was a good issue. Oh well, some people are just hard to please I suppose.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I want to congratulate you on an excellent series thus far.

Judging by your letters column, I seem to be the only person to have been anticipating this series BEFORE it was released, as I had read previews of The Walking Dead on various comics news sites. As a new convert to the Church of Zombie, any news of impending undead goodness is good news to me (we'll just pretend the House of the Dead movie never happened). I can honestly say that despite my anticipation, you've surpassed any expectations I had, and have crafted an excellent series.

I also seem to be one of the few who doesn't give a rolling fuck that the opening scene was reminiscent to that of 28 Days Later. As a "writer" (and I use the term in it's loosest possible sense, as one who is capable of stringing words together in a quasi-coherent manner), I've started

and abandoned several projects (including a zombie series, you bastards) because of similar ideas that sprout up around the same time. I applaud you for sticking to your guns and not buckling to change the scene. I also commend you for being able to carve out your little zombie niche before the inevitable onslaught of walking dead projects that loom just over the horizon (in comics AND movies).

As far as the explanation for the zombies, I'm not sure that's necessary at all. While writing a zombie project of my own, I personally found the time and energy needed to explain the rising of the undead to be a detractor from the events and pacing of the story. Where time and page constraints are needed,

going to lengths to explain something that may or may not have true impact on the story seems pointless, and allows less time for character development. (Nice of me to give you the go ahead to flake out of the explanation, wasn't it?)

To the art. When I first read (and reread, and reread) Battle Pope, Mr. Moore's art struck me as good and a bit cartoony, and he obviously possessed a metric-fuckload of potential. When I opened The Walking Dead and saw his art for the first time since BP, I was awestruck. This dude has some serious chops. As such, I was disappointed to hear that Tony will be leaving the book, although the preview art I've seen from Charlie Adlard looks to be as much of an improvement on HIS previous work as Tony's improvement from BP to TWD.

Anyway, here's hoping that you can keep your series shuffling through the hordes of inevitable hungry rip-offs you're sure to inspire!

Sincerely,
Mike Caswell
<http://www.northboundcomics.com>

PS - Have you read Brian Keene's novel "The Rising"? It's an interesting take on the genre, and will help alleviate any remorse you feel over the mind-theft from 28 Days Later (*cough!* brutally sadistic soldiers *cough!*).

Read a novel? Huh? Are you kidding? There's no... pictures. As far as the explanation for the zombies go, I think that aside from the zombies being in the book this is a fairly realistic story, and that's what makes it work. The people do real things, and it's all very down to Earth... almost normal. ANY explanation would be borderline science fiction... and it would disrupt that normalness. In my mind, the story has moved on. I'm more interested in what happens next then what happened before that caused it all.

On Adlard's art... yeah, I didn't think it was possible but this issue was actually BETTER than issue 7. I'm shocked. Charlie is really bringing his A game to this project. I think it's stunning.

You did it again. I don't know how you do it, but every time I think this title isn't going to get any better than it is already, you go ahead and prove me wrong.

Issue 6 was easily the most emotional issue to date whether it was Jim's decision of his final fate or Andrea's silence or Shane and Rick finally coming to blows none of it can be matched. However, as powerful as these incidents were these don't come close to "It's not the same as killing the dead ones, Daddy." Actually I totally forgot it was a "Zombie World" book. Now THAT is the true indication of how powerful the writing and art on this book is.

I constantly rave about this book, trying to push it and am making headway. So far you are the only book I have been moved to congratulate almost every

Mine Dead.

Craig Wood
Cape Town
South Africa

Glad you liked the issue Craig, we're really proud of how issue six turned out.

This is My first Letter ever written to A Comic Book, So I might as well Write to My Favorite Comic. Here are a few reasons Why "The Walking Dead" is one of the Best.

1:The Zombies are Zombies. They don't run, and Transformation takes Hours, Not Minutes.

2:The Approach on the Zombies sense of smell. (Cooking the deer was what drew them in the Camp in Issue#5, Ain't it?)

3:(You get this alot, But its true)BLACK & WHITE! The Look reminds me of The Original "Night of the Living Dead".

There are more, but you don't wanna hear all of them. Trust me. The first Issue I bought was #3. I WAS AMAZED! I immediately got a car ride back to my Local Hobby shop that my pal runs, and Ordered #1 and #2, the latter of those sold out, but I got 2nd printing now.

I just finished Issue #6, and I wish you guys would be Bi-weekly, But then I know rushing out comics would not be fun for you, and if it's no fun, Why do it? But you can damn well bet I'll be getting every Issue you put out. Its my dream. A ROMERO MOVIE THAT NEVER ENDS! Keep up the not good, not great, but AWE INSPIRING work!

-Jason

P.S. Ever heard of The Paper-&-Pencil RPG "All flesh must be Eaten"? Or the board Game "ZOMBIES!!!"?

I've heard of the game, but I've never seen or played it. I hear a lot of good things about it though. We'd love to take this book to bi-weekly but it's just not possible. Maybe someday though... heh.

Dear Robert,
I picked up your series on a recommendation from a friend and I'm glad I did! It has fast become the ONE title I actually look forward to reading each month! I found it interesting that you said the title refers to the survivors and NOT the zombies! Keep the twists coming!

I just finished reading TWD#6 and all I can say is WOW! You've killed off 3 characters in 2 issues! I didn't see that coming! I guess it's a sign of your writing skill that the issue had a lot of tension and unease in it and not a single zombie! I didn't even realize that fact until you mentioned it in the letters column!

Great job!

I've actually found my heart pounding faster while reading this title! That's amazing when you consider it's pretty hard to build terror & suspense in a silent medium like comics! The scene that really did this for me was from #4 when Rick & the boy had to enter the city looking for guns. I can't think of a more terrifying situation than that and then having to smear your body with zombie gunk to cover up their smell only made it worse! UGH!

I know a lot of people have mentioned DEADWORLD in the letter pages. I'm surprised you had never heard of it or read it before? It was a good series that unfortunately went away with the collapse of Caliber Comics. It put a new spin on the zombie genre with a talking, intelligent zombie leader (King Zombie) and the zombie plague was unleashed on earth due to dark magic. They weren't afraid to kill characters off in that series either which is always a plus and makes for a more realistic read.

Just wanted to send you these quick thoughts and wish you continued success. You guys deserve it! I'll be along for what I'm sure will be a LONG run.

Marc Cawiezel
Shit Hole Missouri

On second thought... that whole "The title refers to the survivors and not the zombies" thing sound pretentious as hell. So let's just forget I ever said it. All I really meant by it was that this book isn't about the zombies (as you should all know by now) and that there are going to be MANY issues that don't have one single zombie in them (like issue six). The title is "The Walking Dead" because I thought it sounded cool.

You know I never lend out my comic books. I take them home, read them and put them away for months at a time until I feel like I want to read them again. But then this book comes out and changes all that, I mean it has zombies, substance, emotion and did I mention zombies? So I start lending the issues to friends only to get them back by the time the next issue comes out finding the back cover has the number of finger prints you would find in a small country, damn glossy black. So I guess I'm saying this is a

damn good book and I'm going to have to make my friends start to purchase it themselves, they're cut off from mine! Keep up the good work.

Sean Delaney

Well, starting with last issue we did away with those pesky fingerprint attracting black back covers. I hope you like the new white ones. I was a bit wary at first but I think they've grown on me.

Hey there,

I'd first like to start by mentioning that the whole 28 days thing is pointless. When I first saw the trailer me and my dad both immediately said hey cool, a Day of the Triffids movie. I do suggest you pick that book up...its very good. And yet no one mentioned it, because it's a rather little known book, and I think quite hard to find here in America (personally someone bought it for me in England). Good movie though. Plus it makes perfect sense that he'd be in a hospital, otherwise what could have happened? "They left while I was sleeping" hahaha. Great idea to have one of the

characters get bitten but not die, I anticipate a very powerful scene deciding weather to kill him. Then again no one has been bitten before, so we don't know how long it takes. Could be anywhere from Dawn of the Dead (very quickly) to Resident Evil (takes a few hours). I'd also like to mention that issue 4 cost me like \$15, *damn comic book stores*. So I wish I'd known about the TPB earlier grrrr.

I shall continue to be an avid reader

t0m0

Sorry about that. From now on, keep in mind TPBs will be collecting the series in six issue chunks from here on out. If you miss an issue, wait for the TPB instead of paying \$15. Unless I'm selling it. Of course, the TPBs won't all be \$9.95 like the first one, that was just an introductory, drug-dealer marketing scheme.

And that does it for this issue, folks. See you back here next month for issue 9 when things start to get... interesting (that'll be nice for a change, huh?).

Robert Kirkman

**“Kirkman’s writing
transcends the typical ‘chased-by-zombies’
genre and is
easily one of the most dramatically
involving books of recent memory. add to
that incredible art work and
superlative production values
and ‘walking
dead’ has become my favorite
comic being published.”**

**--- Marc Andreyko,
“Manhunter”, “Torso”, “Casefiles: Sam & Twitch”**



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 11, damn... check it out guys. Issue 11. This is so cool. Both of my creator owned regular series are in double digits. I gotta admit... a year ago... I didn't know if I'd EVER get to do an issue 10. I repeat, this is so cool.

Now that we've got THAT out of the way. Some of you may have noticed that we've slipped in the schedule, and also that this issue is shipping a couple weeks after issue 10 (or it SHOULD have barring any printing mishaps). I'm doing something at Marvel called Marvel Knights 2099 and I swore up and down that my Marvel work wouldn't get in the way of Invincible and this fine title... BUT, a strange thing happened... an entire month went by without me realizing I needed to letter and turn in these issues that Charlie was sending me. I just didn't... notice. I had these five Marvel Knights one-shots thrown into my lap at the last minute and all five scripts were due at the same time, that time being NOW. I kinda lost track of days in there... and then the San Diego Con threw another wrench into the plans. Anyway... I've fixed it, and as a result we'll be seeing a rapid succession of issues until we get to issue 14. There should be no more than two or three weeks between each issue. I hope to have 13 and the TPB containing issues 7-12 out on the last Wednesday in October... so let's see if I can manage that. Oh, and sorry guys. I promise I won't let this happen again.

Just to reiterate, this was NOT Charlie's fault. Charlie's been nothing but a professional on this title and has been early turning in every issue this far. I'm the fuck up here. Direct hate mail to ME. You know where to find me.

You can send some Cliff's way too if you want. I'm sure he deserves it for something... the fucker.

Now that that's off my chest... let's dive into the ol' mailbag and see if anyone's got anything interesting to say.

Hi guys,

Just wanted to take time out to say what a fantastic comic you've got going here. Not only does it concern zombies (They don't run! Yay!), but it's also one of the best written and wonderfully drawn books out there.

As you may have guessed, I'm not a big fan of running zombies. That was my one major gripe with the new Dawn of the Dead, although admittedly it did add a certain element of surprise and danger that is sometimes missing from films featuring the slower zombies. But then saying that, what I've always liked about zombie films (such as Romero's trilogy) is that despite the selling point being the presence of zombies, the main focus is on the characterization of the survivors and how they cope with the new world that is facing them, and I'm glad to see a similar approach in your series.

As we found out with Shane in the first story arc, a lot of the time the problems arise from the survivors and the zombies are just an unpleasant addition to the mix.

The art is another aspect of the series that works really well - the black and white suits the tone of the stories and from what I've seen we're in good hands (no pun intended...).

Needless to say, as long as the level of characterization and awesome stories continue, you'll find me a regular reader. Hell, even if you do eventually bring in aliens and stuff like that, I'm definitely along for the ride until the very end.

Here's too many years of the dead walking the Earth!

Simon Prior (UK)

What can I say other than WOO, and thanks for the kind words?

Hi Mr. Kirkman and The Walking Dead Crew,

I know many say this but I really mean it when I say, this is the first time I have ever written a letter to be printed in a comic book! I saved it for the HOLY GRAIL of intense ZOMBIE DRAMA BOOKS, The Walking Dead! Guys, this book is, GOD I wish I can come up with a better word, &%%\$&ing GREAT!!!! I read many books ranging from all comic book companies but your book is by far the best story to date! I want to be a writer, but with the small amount of time that I have it is very hard, but because of your great storytelling, it has inspired me to get back to track and start writing again! You guys are incredible! I just picked up issue #9 and man, can you say HBO MINI SERIES! Screw making a movie, (even though that would be sweet) but what I can see is a mini series on HBO titled THE WALKING DEAD!!!! How sweet would that be?! Just like running to the comic book store every month to pick up the latest issue of TWD, now you would have to run home every Sunday night at 9:00 and on HBO a new episode!!!! CAN YOU SAY "WOO HAA"!! Anyway, I know you guys are busy making the HOTTEST book this side of COMICVILLE so I will let you go till next time. Thanks for reading my letter and again, Keep up the AWESOME work and ROCK ON!!!

An Honest FAN,
Toney Tapia

P.S. If there is a live mini series or movie, can I rock with you guys as a hardcore ZOMBIE!!!!?

No. We'll not be having any "hardcore" zombies in any live-action version of TWD... that's just too low brow for us. And what's up with you just wanting a mini-series? We're not good enough for a full on series? What the hell man. I almost didn't print your letter. In FACT, I still might not... just to spite you.

Hot damn, issue #9 was awesome. This series leaves me on the edge of my seat like no other. The endings are always exciting as hell. I just hate the wait between every issue! I know that's how comics work though, and I'm used to it by now. Keep up the good work.

-Mike Neuman

The wait between issues WILL be shorter over the next three months.

Letter Hacks,

Holy shit. Issue #9. Just...damn. Carl. Shot. Totally didn't see that coming at all. I'm not gonna bother to ask if he's alright, I'm sure I'll find out next issue before this gets printed(if it even does). But see that's the thing I love about this book. The unpredictability of it. No matter how much you love the character, knowing that at any second something could happen to them just makes it all the more enjoyable to anticipate and read each month. Adlard's art is really adapting to the book. I'm really enjoying it more and more with each issue. I wish I could write more but I'm still sort of reeling from it. I trust you guys, I know it'll turn out in a kick ass way.

Keep it coming!
- Mike Storniolo

Man, look at young Mike Storniolo taking the reigns from Chris Piers as guy-who-gets-a-letter-printed-in-every-issue. I guess Chris got a date... or some action of some kind from a member of the opposite sex... or same sex... I don't really know what he's into. I could tell you what I THINK he's into though... have you seen the guy? And yes, Mike... Adlard is kicking much ass with this book. I'm excited as you guys are when I first see his pages. Adlard = The Man.

Zombiologists,

Daa-yam! Carl's shot! Didn't see that coming.

Which is why I really like what you all are doing. I never know what to expect (which ain't easy in this medium). And I'm torn, ta boot. If Carl isn't dead, I'll be a little disappointed, but also very relieved. Disappointed because "I knew you wouldn't kill him". Relieved because I've really gotten close to the little guy.

And Charlie kicks! I was skeptical at first, but was very pleasantly surprised when he debuted with issue 7. I've followed his work since the X-Files. He's improved dramatically (and I liked his work before). I never imagined I'd prefer his take on the material better Tony's, but I honestly do. He brings an amazing amount of needed atmosphere to the book. With issue 9, he has hit his stride.

75 issues, huh? Or will you have changed it to 100 by the time the next issue comes out? No matter. I'm there.

Later,
Chip from Tampa, FL

You're right. I suck... I'd never kill Carl, he ain't dead. Congrats to you for seeing it coming. It was also spoiled on previews of the cover for this very issue, so I doubly suck. Sorry. And yeah... I'd like to do AT LEAST 75 issues but this isn't a Preacher, Transmetropolitan, Bone type book where I want to do 75 or so and quit. I want to do as much as I possibly can. If Charlie and I were working on issue 150 thirteen years from now... I'd be a happy man. I wonder how Charlie would feel? Probably sick of drawing people standing around talking, I would think.

Touché, Kirkman.

Perhaps I just wanted very badly for Charlie Adlard to have drawn Mantooth?

Well played,
Chris

* No disrespect to Andy Kuhn. Though, I suppose I've inadvertently done just that. Let's burn some bridges then—fuck that guy

Yes. Indeed, fuck that guy. Also... fuck those of you reading this who don't get that the above letter references a letter and response from a previous letters column. Actually, though... I love that Andy Kuhn... he's a fucking stud too... just so you know.

Hey Robert, Charlie and Cliff,
Just wanna congratulate you guys on an awesome issue this month. Nice fucking cliffhanger again Robert! Damn, you gotta stop doing that. But I'm definitely getting use to Charlie's art and really liking it. Just thought I'd let you guys know what a good job you were doing, like you already don't know. Thanks

Mark B.

I knew the changeover would be tough to take at first, and change is difficult, but Charlie really pulled out all the stops and is kicking much ass on this book. I knew you guys would fall in love with the guy as much as I have. Good thing we've got that Atlantic Ocean between us, eh Charlie?

Dear Dead Walkers,

Now, I've been a fan of the Zombie genre for quite a while now. I don't buy too many monthly comic titles, but I saw the Days Gone Bye paperback and I thought I'd give it a shot. All I can say is: HOLY FREAKING CRAP!! This is Zombies done right! The characters, the story, and the artwork were all so spot on I could sing (don't worry, I won't). I ran right out and snapped up issues 7-9. I then let my girlfriend and her sister borrow them, and now we're all hooked. A whole month seems so long to wait for the next installment now! I do have to admit I was very disappointed to see Mr. Moore go. Nothing against Mr. Adlard, but Moore's style was just so perfect for the subject matter. Ah, you're probably sick of hearing that by now. One touch I found very gratifying is the length of the letters pages. In a time when most comics don't even bother with one now It's nice to see some genuine feedback. Now just a few quick questions before this e-mail gets any longer:

1. Any chance of Zombie Dogs in the future? or are only humans affected? 2. Which month are our heroes in by this point? 3. If you had to pick one all time favorite Zombie movie of all time, which would it be?. Ever played the "Zombies!!!" board game? I highly recommend it.

Keep it coming, -Jason Price
PS- pleasepleaseplease don't let Cory be dead!

Who the hell is Cory?

1. No dog zombies. Only Humans are effected. Haven't been keeping track. I'm thinking March or so, by this issue. Day of the Dead. No. I don't care.

Robert,
HOLY CRAP!!!!

How could you do that to little Carl? He's the first kid in a comic I didn't feel like chucking out a 9th story window! Other than that the issue still rocked! Keep up the great work and I'm still into "Dead" for the long haul!

John L. Parduba

Relax, Carl's fine.

Hi,

I own a comic shop up in Lacey, WA. I have been reading your book only for a couple months, now (sorry). I love it, though. The irony is that my fiancée has been a HUGE fan of both this and Invincible. He spent month after month trying to get me to add them to my ever growing stack of reads. I try to read just about all the comics that come out, but I am not a fan of Zombie fare, so, sadly, I skip them, and leave them to my resident Zombie Fanatic. When the trade paperback came out, I decided to give it a whirl. I LOVED IT! LOVE IT! LOVED IT! What an amazing read! I must say that I was happy to have read it as a trade, because your freaking cliffhangers drive me nuts! I just finished reading #9, for the third time. And yep, every time, Carl gets shot. I can't wait for the next one. I read a lot of comics in my week...but, there are my Wednesday reads. The special few that I take time out of the busiest day of the week to read...this one has hit the list:)

It is consistently on the "Gabi's Picks" list now. :) It is one of the books I put in people's hand that like Zombies, Survival Comics, stories about people interacting, or anything else I can think of. We went from selling 5 copies a month to ordering 35 in the last previews....that beats out some of my Batman, X-title numbers! We are not a huge shop so, those numbers may not be impressive to you, but for us, those are good, solid numbers. I have sold over 20 of the first tradepaperback, and have ordered more. :) We give a money back guarantee on it. If they don't like it, they can bring it back. Not a single return to date:) It is a great book, and I really enjoy it.

In addition, we have upped order on all your other books. Like the new 2099 series, we

ordered more of because of your quality of writing:)

Thanks for the fun read, keep up the good work.

If you ever have any plans on being in this neck of the woods, we would LOVE to have you for a signing. I was sad that I didn't get a chance to meet you at San Diego Con. We were there for far too short a stay:(

Thanks!
Gabi

It's always good to hear from the retailers of the world. I hear a lot of you saying that you have a money back guarantee on Invincible and/or The Walking Dead and I must say that I REALLY appreciate that. It's nice to hear about good full-service retailers helping sell the books. You guys already have SOOOOO much on your shoulders (as I mentioned in a previous letters column) and the fact that so many of you are going that extra mile and taking time to REALLY promote my books does not go unappreciated. Thank you very much.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
I am one of the owners of a small shop in Des Moines, Iowa and would like to thank you for your comments in issue number nine about preordering and sales. You nailed down, better than anyone I've heard recently, the problems the retailer faces. Most people do not understand what it's like to run a comic shop. It's not all sun and cloudless skies. It's tough. When a retailer takes a risk on a title, because it looks interesting, they think it can sell or ties into better selling books during a crossover, all the extra copies left sitting on the shelf are non-returnable. Most retailers get between 45 and 55 percent discount on the comics they order and less on action figures and specialty merchandise. So, the ten extra copies left over of that "hot" new book by that "hot" new artist/writer team with a suggested retail price of \$2.99 each is going to be a loss of \$15. I hope the next time people go into a comic shop, they should take a look at the shelves. Every book on the racks is for the retailer to keep and I for one don't need eight extra copies of the latest issue of Iron Man in my personal collection. All those books have been paid for and are generating NO revenue.

The thing is there isn't a shop I've been in that doesn't offer a hold policy of some kind. Most retailers, the true backbone of the comic book industry, use hold customer preorders as one of the biggest tools in judging what to buy and what to take chances on.

The Walking Dead is an amazingly good book both when it comes to writing/art as well as sales. I am happy to say that The Walking Dead is one of our top ten best sellers. However, I know at least two other shops in town don't even carry it. The eternal dilemma of the small press comic. Preorder-ers are to thank for some of the increase in our sales, but word of mouth is easily the best tool. I love the zombie horror genre and I ordered TWD for myself, while taking the risk of eight issues for my shop. It sold okay at first, mostly due to my recommendation. Purchases stayed around ten a month until the trade came out. I thank you, Mr. Kirkman, for using the trade paperback how it should be used, to help sell the ongoing series. I've now nearly tripled my orders in less than a year, thanks to the trade, unheard of for any other book in our shop.

Sorry, to prattle on. I just had to express my gratitude to you for your comments. I truly wish more creators would sound off on the problems in the industry.

Nonetheless, thanks and keep up the great work on what is easily one of my personal favorites right now.

Matt Johnson
Co-Owner
Cup o' Kryptonite
4521 Fleur Drive Suite F
Des Moines, Iowa 50321

Thanks for the letter Matt. Like I said above... my thanks to you and your retailing brethren for really busting ass for this book and MAKING it a success. I don't usually print addresses but I figured this was the address of your store and if people are in the area, I want people to support you. Although, from what you say in your letter... if people are READING this letters column, and they live in your area... they probably got this book from you in the first place... so I'm really just wasting my time. People... drive to Des Moines, give this guy your money. He's one of the good guys. Cool store name, by the way.

Dear Letter Hacks,
Here's my letter, in haiku...

It is really weird
How Kirkman thinks up plot lines
That I'd like to live.

Not that I'm psycho,
But wouldn't it be crazy
If that did happen?

Zombies all over...
One thing's for sure, it would change
Our priorities!

In the ninth issue,
They all just want food (or sex).
Pretty basic needs.

Anyway, point is -
Some of us (in a sick way)
Would welcome that world.

It would certainly
Be one exciting life, huh?
If just for a while...

But soon we'd go nuts
With no police to stop us.
Justice - ours to make.

Rick has a big choice.
And I can't wait to find out!
Will he shoot that dude?

Well, by now we know...
But what would each of us do
In poor old Rick's place?

Kirkman, your brain's neat!
I'm getting used to the art.
Different, but cool.

Again, Robert, thanks
For making a dark, odd world
That we can live in!

Now I've got to go!
There's a zombie in my yard!
Yes!!!!...No...shit...mailman.

Bye-O!
Stephen Lacombe
Belleville, Ontario

Wow... my first Haiku. I was going to be all clever and try and reply to you in a Haiku but y'know... I'm just too tired for that right now... so you'll just have to settle for me making fun of you. A Haiku?! What the hell were you thinking, man? That's just WACKY... immensely wacky. Jesus... I hope that isn't your real name.

Glad you like the book.
What's coming up next is cool.
I think you'll dig it.

I'm going to go laugh until I pee blood now.

Dear Mr Image Big Shot,

(Had a ring to it in Issue 9 that I liked :D)

So..... you big mean bastard.... shooting kids in the fucking back now!! That's just so fucking cruel! LoL... what a shocking and depressing end to issue 9! and a great way to let the suspense build in time for issue 10! Shame that the previews for issue 11 kind of spoil the fate of young Carl's destiny in this horrific world, but like some people on the image forums have said, we still don't know what Rick will do with this guy who shot Carl! Now? Why, if you can across 3 zombies. Two big adults and a kid, would you kill the kid first? Obviously the adults are going to be bigger and more powerful. As well as cover more distance if you need to scurry away! That's it, I'm not going to speculate more on it.... it will just get me gagging for the next issue more, and is obviously your plan (Damn you Robert!) Few things I have to say about the letters column in the same issue. One, thanks for printing my letter. Ever since I started using my mates (Tim Gentles also in the letters column for that issue) computer, I have posted a letter to you after every issue, and not only did I get one in. But I got my issue 6 and 7 letter in. So thanks again. Glad to hear that you didn't want to end it at 75 if you could. I sure that I can vouch for plenty of other 'Deadites' around the world, that we will support this book till the end. It really is something

special! Okay so like many people said, Tony Moore was a big loss when he left the book, and its a shame he couldn't stay on, and even though it took a few issues to get used to, I have to say that both Cliff and Charlie have done a outstanding job at taking over and I am glad that you have decide to use these talented artists. Good job guys, and keep up the good work :D I have to agree with Chris Piers's letter. The new addition of Tyreese is excellent, and just what the group needs. The one thing I am looking forward to seeing now is, someone famous joining the group and seeing how they are effected in the world. Should be an interesting way of seeing how they are coping with the sudden life style change.

Anyway, off I go.... got other comics to read But I seriously enjoying it
RK, and I have pre-ordered up to issue 13 and ordered the second arc's
Trade Paperback, and now am getting two copies of each issue!

Now that's a fan for ya!

Lee Sanders (Little Lee)
SW England

P.S. Heard the good news at Comic Con. Congratulations!
You going to be there next year? I might have to buy a canoo and come over. :D

Actually, Lee. If you've seen Dawn of the Dead you'll remember that child zombies are actually quite hyper and much faster than adult zombies. Either that or child actors just couldn't grasp the whole concept of moving slow and moaning. In fact... that scene in Dawn of the Dead may be the first appearance of the dreaded "fast zombies" that seem to be plaguing our fine genre. As far as bringing a celeb into this book, I just don't think it's something I want to do. I just get flashbacks to the Tom Petty scene in the Postman... and I know I could never top the emotion conveyed in it with anything I could do here. So I figure... why try?

Hello Walking Dead folks,

I love zombie movies, and I have zombie holocaust dreams quite frequently.

I was sort of skeptical of zombie comics at first. After describing a zombie dream to my local comic dealer, he turned me on to Walking Dead. I bought the trade on my lunch break and I didn't get any work done for the rest of the day. Your book sucked me in and there was no escape. I had zombie dreams all night long. Now I'm getting the single issues and I LOVE IT! I just picked up issue nine today, and again I'm not getting any work done.
I can't believe the end of this one. That was so HARSH!
My only complaint is that I can't read issue ten RIGHT NOW!
Make more faster!

You've got my money for as long as this book exists.
Keep up the great work!
-Chris Taylor

Gayest letter ever. Zombie DREAMS?! You should have written a haiku.

Just read issue number 9. Damn. And I thought I was a rotten bastard. What you did at the end of this issue (another stroke of brilliance) was just...damn brave. Congrats. How's your karma these days 'cause after killing that kid I have a feeling some bad mojo may be on the way.

Keep up the great work, Rob!
Ryan "Rotten" Turek

My karma is just fine... you see, not only is the kid not dead, but he's also NOT REAL. See, I have all my bases covered.

Dear Letter Hacks,

First, let me say that I greatly enjoy the work all of you put into not just TWD, but all the other books you work on. I have been with TWD since #1 and look very much forward to each next issue.

Now that I have said that, let me get to the reason for this letter. I just finished issue 9 and have noticed alot of artist bashing in the past few issues. Granted Tony Harris is one of the most talented out there. More so than certain cover hogs out there. But, you have to understand that it was time for him to go on to other things. We are now at a point where the TWD story will be getting a bit darker. Characters will be acting more out of emotion than logic. What better way to reflect this than with an artist that has a more "heavy and thick" look to his work. Honestly, this title could have started with Adlard and Rathburn and later switched to Harris and we would be hearing the same complaints in reverse. People just need to accept that Tony is gone and the book is now in the more than capable hands of Charlie and Cliff. If you have read issue 9 yet, you would know that this title is going to be taking us in a whole new direction now. I won't spoil the ending, but let's just say the new art will be shown as the masterpiece it is.

Anyway, I just had to take a few moments to defend the guys that give me my favorite monthly series.

Also, in the letters page of issue 9, one person suggested a TV show. I could just see it....the Doctor Who of zombies. Man am I gonna have some sweet dreams tonight.

Take care and I am looking forward to issue 10 and beyond.

Tone Penley
Tampa, FL

Tony Harris is indeed a talented fellow. The problem was that DC snatched him up to illustrate Brian K. Vaughan's wonderful new title, Ex Machina at the same time Marvel grabbed him to illustrate Mark Rickett's Iron Man run (which is shipping along side my four-issue run on Captain America). So he was more than a little busy and had to move on. Anyway, glad you did what Charlie and Cliff are doing--or as I like to call them; the C & C music factory.

Letterhacks,

Oh, Robert... What have you done?

I almost never make it to my comic store on New Comic days. It's hard enough getting out there once a month, let alone every Wednesday. So I've gotta keep myself from reading spoilers and asking people what happened in your comics until I'm actually able to pick up the issues I had been missing. But sometimes I get too curious and I must know at least a little bit. Try to imagine my terror when I logged in at PJ and read that you had offed yet another character. First thought that came to mind was you had done in Rick. But that didn't make any sense because I had seen the cover with a gun to the back of his head for a later issue... which DIDN'T make me feel any better, just to let you know. Second thought was that it was either Dale or Andrea because everyone knows that you're not supposed to have sex in these kinda stories!... or does that rule only apply to horror movies? But then I continued to read on and saw a comment by a fellow PJer stating that the ending to #9 was even worse if you have kids.

...Kids? No way. Robert wouldn't kill a kid says I!

I hate it when I'm wrong. Not only did poor little Carl have to go but so did Donna. It took me a while but I had actually begun to like her. And then you did it again... just like you did with Jim. You took them away. But the worst thing about this is that it is all done so very well! I know that their deaths are going to have a greater impact on future issues. I just love all these character so much. More so than, dare I say, any other comic character I've ever read. They are, for lack of a better word, real. No bulging muscles, no perfect hair or spandex. These people could be my neighbors! So of course I'm saddened when not only one, but two characters are killed off in one issue. And xadrian was right. It is MUCH worse when you have kids.

Anyway, enough babbling. I'm not up there with Chris Piers yet. Charlie, you are doing wonderfully. They all seem

more natural in this issue and I can't wait to see what you've got for us in the next one. Robert, exceptional as always... even if you do keep killing the characters I like. Awesome issue, guys. Keep it up!

Jenn Lee

The sad reality of this series is that characters have to die. That's just the facts. One way to make sure that you readers are always surprised by who dies is to kinda make these decisions on the fly. When I started the script for 9 I knew somebody was going to die, but I hadn't decided who until I had mapped out the whole issue. I think it keeps things more true to life if I play it this way. It's also more fun. In the future though, the deaths will become less frequent as our characters settle in. So far it's been and every three issues or so. I want to at least once go about 10 issues without anyone dying... let's see if I can pull that off.

Dudes

Since reading a review of your book in SFX magazine I immediately bought the first book and instantly hooked. I hope you can carry this on for years and years. How cool would a "The Walking Dead" television series be. being able to develop stories and characters over 22 episodes a season. I think the American television networks better start giving you calls. Has there ever been a zombie television drama?

To all American zombie fans I recommend Shaun of the Dead which should be hitting your cinemas soon, very funny, very scary and one of the best zombie movies since Day of the Dead.

Anyway love the book and wont stop reading till you stop writing.

Blake Goddard
Leicester, UK

I didn't know we were reviewed in SFX magazine. I suppose by your reaction is was a positive one. A TV series would be nice. I know I'D certainly love to see one. We'll see if it happens though. Any developments on that front will be announced here first. Shaun of the Dead is in fact an AWESOME damn movie. It should be in theatres here in the states by the time this issue sees print, so I recommend you all run out and see it immediately. Don't let the comedy fool you, this is a full on, kick ass, zombie movie... that also happens to be funny. The gore is there, the zombies are there, the effects are great. It's a fine flick.

Kirkman, you Bastard.

I hate zombies. I've never seen a zombie movie. I've never wanted to see a zombie movie. The only reasons I even bought this book was because of Invincible. That and your shameless plugs at San Diego, as you autographed each issue for me. Invincible is awesome. That horrible plot turn with Omni was awesome. (I loved the trash bag gag.)

I hate that while reading TWD in a small room, I'm afraid that when I go back into the main house, all my family will be zombies. I hate that I was afraid to sleep out on my deck last night in the cool summer night. I hate that I can't wait until the next issue comes out.

Damn you Kirkman.
-Brian Powell

Is this hate mail? I just can't tell.

Hello Mr Kirkman,

This is the first time I have written to comic so please bear with me, the comic is simply fantastic, sheer genius. I always leave your comic till last out of my weekly comic bundle, just to savour it, the best till last.

Seeing that a lot of people that write to you from the United Kingdom always seem to be English, as a Scotsman I thought it was my duty to tell you that a fair amount of Scottish people read you comic as well! We are lucky enough to have 3 comic shops in Aberdeen, and your comic always sells out, sometimes there are not enough for the pre-orders either! (any chance of sending more the U.K's way?)

Anyway here are a couple of questions I hope you will answer:

1. At first I agreed with "He who is Q" in the issue 9 letters page about Charlie Adlard, but now I find his take on the series growing on me, hopefully he will be with us for a while yet but are planning to get other artists to have a turn on the comic?

2. Have you heard about Shaun of the Dead? Its Britain's take on the Zombie flick (better than 28 days later in my opinion) and is Bloody funny to boot. I urge you to check it out, most American Movie sites seem to have a few articles/ trailer downloads on the film!

3. I know your comic is centered on America and American characters, but how has the rest of the world dealing with the Living dead? Have less populated countries (say like Saudi Arabia, Greenland and Australia) did they manage to contain the menace more effectively, maybe still having some form of government? I know you have to centralize on the "little people" and ignore the larger picture but it would be interesting to find out what happened to the rest of the planet.

Anyhow, cheers for listening and keep up the good work!

Paul Middleton
Scotland (United Kingdom)
Aberdeenshire

Yeah, I've notice that an unusual amount of mail on this book comes from the UK. I think that's cool as hell. Good to have all you dirty foreigners aboard. Now, for the questions.

1. This is Charlie's book for as long as he'll take it. I love his work, doing this book with him has been a dream come true. I hope he stays on it for years and years.

2. Seen it, loved it, raved about it in this letters column many times. Seek out "Undead" as well. It's also a great flick.

3. I don't even know how the rest of the world is doing. The thing about this book is that it focuses on Rick and crew. These people would never really figure out what's going on in California, let alone Australia. So we may never find out what's going on in the rest of the world. Although, as with most thing, only time will tell.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Issue #9 was great and all but why is no one looking or listening to any form of communication equipment? Some sort of radio should be on at all times. In issue #9 the thing you did the best was really present that even though the zombies walk slow - you can still get in a panic when you see them and any misstep could be fatal.

I wanted to ask you about a horror theory I heard years ago. Basically, the theory was that horror was popular in odd numbered decades. 1930's - Dracula, 1950's - UFO's & Aliens, 1970 - Exorcist & DC/Marvel Horror, 1990's - All the horror nostalgia movies. So we should be in a horror free decade now right? Well, it was a loose theory based that when times got scary so did the horror genre and then things calmed down and horror took a back seat. But it seems horror and scary subject matters are all the norm these days, especially in comics. Do you think the world just got constantly scarier the last few years and horror might be here to stay?

Brendan Walsh

That may be the case. I do enjoy the horror genre a great deal but if THIS is what we have to put up with in order for it to thrive... no thanks. I do think you've figured it out though. As for the communications thing, Rick was out for a good deal of the initial reactions and whatnot to the zombie threat. By the time he got to Atlanta our crew had given up on listening to radios... batteries... electricity... these things aren't exactly growing on trees, and are usually used for more important things like flashlights.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I cut my teeth on adult-themed comics with some of the best: Sandman and Preacher. I liked the surrealness

of Sandman and the boldness of Preacher. I'd trade both for The Walking Dead. I'm loving this book very much. Great work by all. I think Charlie Adlard is doing an excellent job as new interior artist and I'm very grateful that Tony Moore is still able to do covers (issue #9 has to be one of the best covers of all time). I have mixed feelings on the greys, but for the most part they make the black and white more "real" (how else would you describe it?). And the writing... if Ellis is Hemingway, you're Stephen King. You make the unbelievable - believable. Seeing Carl shot at the end of #9 let's me know that no one's safe, there are no safe characters' (except maybe Rick and in my opinion, he shouldn't be untouchable either) and that is a King-like twist. But most of all, you really develop the characters. If the characters are believable then the whole story is.

Questions:

1) Love the fact that you're not going to explain where the zombies came from. However, what about the impact this would have on survivor's beliefs. I'm an evangelical Christian and I often think, how would something like this affect my faith? Would I abandon it, change it, or maintain it? I have thought that a great idea for a story would be a Christian Youth Retreat out in the woods under a living dead siege. Imagine that dialogue! "Where's God in all this?" Suddenly a few "F-bombs" by the unruly teens would seem inconsequential, or would it?

2) If The Walking Dead makes it to television, rather than live action can we have animation (ala Todd McFarlane's Spawn - yeah I bet you didn't think evangelical Christians would watch read The Walking Dead or even watch "Spawn", well we know of one that does)? I don't know if you'd have any say in that but if you did, that would be the best way to see the characters "colorized" and "come to life"

3) Without giving anything away, I'm pretty sure Carl was shot by a survivor who was defending himself, not against the undead, but "scavengers" (that would explain the destroyed food in the general store, they couldn't take it and didn't want anyone else to have it). Romero's working a new dead film where class warfare is the main conflict. We'll see possible civil war? Such as, one community of survivors vs. another community over resources? (this would be a strong possibility down, if this group keeps coming across survivors then we might assume there are other groups like them and if they're not "scavengers" then the drama is tenfold! Who do you root for when both sides are fighting for survival, can the coexist?).

If this sees print in the back of your book it'll take up a lot of coveted letter space. This is my first letter to any comic book and as long you're around it won't be my last. Keep the TPBs coming. I collect the monthlies, but love the TPB for real "sitdown" reading (I missed #1 and #2, but the TPB made up for it). If there is a successor to Stephen King or George Romero, Robert Kirkman may be the man (even if your work isn't truly "horror" or "macabre").

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS - Have you ever spoken to George Romero? If there is a fifth dead movie he should let you handle the script!

1. We'll be dealing with a little religion in upcoming issues. But not exactly in the way you're thinking.
2. I'd love to see it as a live-action show with the color washed out. Maybe not totally black and white... but dulled down and muted, not quite realistic colors. I think that would be neat.
3. Stay tuned.

Oh, come on... you can't ALL be writing in to a comic for the first time, I mean COME ON! The TPB's will be coming every six months. We'll have a TPB in October and April of every year as long as this book continues. Never spoke to George, but I'm easy to get in touch with.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Just finished reading Issue #9. Wow! You sure know how to knock your readers for a loop. I sure hope that little Carl isn't dead. (That's a testament to your skills as a writer. Most children in comics are too obnoxious to care about.) I've been loving "THE WALKING DEAD" since issue one. Thanks for giving us intelligent, moving, poignant, character-driven stories that still manage to be creepy, scary, suspenseful, and full of surprises. I have to admit that I miss Mr. Moore's art, but Mr. Adlard is doing a GREAT job. I especially loved the panels on page nine showing the zombies reacting to the gunshot. As a reader, you couldn't help but respond, "Oh, s**t!!!"

As an African-American reader, I also want to thank you for your realistic, non-stereotypical depictions of minority characters. It's great to see people of color featured prominently in the storylines.

"THE WALKING DEAD" is one of my favorite reads each month. Keep up the FANTASTIC work you're doing, and I'll keep reading! Take care!

Sincerely,
Christopher Providence

Oh, come on, aside from Morgan in the first issue, the first prominent black character I introduce is a damn pro sports player! Not to mention the fact that he latched on to the only single white chick almost immediately. You should be up in arms!! I'm perpetuating stereotypes here. Didn't you see the issue where Glenn used his Kung Fu math skills?

Wow. The initial 6 issue story arc was powerful, but this new arc is just fantastic! I've just read #9 & it blew me away. Comic of the year by a clear mile! Keep up the great work guys.

Mark Jarvis
London

PS Whenever you name-check artist Charlie Adlard's work you never mention the incredible stuff he's done this side of the pond on 2000AD over the last few years - particularly on 'Judge Dredd' & most recently on the funk'n' great Pat Mills penned 'Savage'.

Sorry. I've never really picked up any 2000AD stuff (sorry) so I'm not familiar with Charlie's stuff there. But he recently sent me some jpegs of the stuff he did prior to taking over this book and I must say... it's some of his best work. I absolutely loved it. I've also always been a fan of Pat Mills Marshall Law so I can't help but think that Savage must be the best thing ever produced.

I just got my copy of the second printing of issue #7. I have your book on pre-order with my LCS, but he dropped the ball with 7. From what it sounds like someone above him dropped the ball. Why are you guys publishing so few books that issue 7 (not 2 or 3) sells out of the publisher in 3 days??? However, this allowed me to read 7, 8 and 9 all at the same time. I wouldn't allow myself to skip an issue. I was so pumped, I re-read 1-6, and read all the letters. -
Some of your fans can be a real pain in the rear!

I've been collecting comics sporadically since I was a wee lad picking up TMNT and usagi yojimbo in the mid 80s. The TMNT sell out of the late 80s turned me off the genre for a spell. However, Dave McKean's Cages sporadic release dates kept me coming back to stores during this time. I usually got my fix with manga purchased at bookstores though. You may notice a theme between these books. None have color. I typically don't buy a book if it does have color.

What is wrong with a Black-and-White book? This is nothing to apologize for! It is a feature to be flaunted. A poorly published coloring job is awful, at best color muddies the art. There is something clean about true black and white. The gray tones you use affect mood and character. Your book is beautiful.

Other titles I have loved are: Now's terminator series (of which 'sara's slammers' has an odd connection with the day of the dead: post apocalyptic warriors living in missile silos in Florida with a strong female leader named sara - a good one to check out), Hex (dc's short lived post-apocalyptic biker/western), and Tank Girl. These were all, with various amounts of comic book silliness, about people - placed in a post-apocalyptic world. This is why I love your book so much.

While I am sorry to see Mr. Moore leave, Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn's work is stellar. I didn't notice, at first read, the switch.

As to your fan's further harping about electricity, injured hands, comparisons to movies, continuity issues, etc... GET A LIFE! Has no one ever heard of the concept of the suspension of disbelief? This is a story about zombies in a comic book format! For pete's sake!

The narrative quality of the story causes me to suspend my disbelief. I am a slobbering fan boy - I will admit it. However, the quality of this title does force me to not notice such details. Upon the fifth or sixth read it

may come into my mind, but such matters are beyond this book.

You are doing an excellent job. So excellent that I have been inspired to write you. The first comic book I have ever written. Thank you for your stated devotion to this title. I have had difficulty keeping up the list of titles for my bag, as most everything I like is not only obscure, but they are always mini-series. Whether they mean to be or not. You publish an on time - consistently well written and paced - and beautifully drawn comic book. What a rarity.

Congratulations on your Eisner Award nomination. You were robbed. I mean, plastic man?? come on!

steven walker

It's not that we're printing very little of these books. We've been printing THOUSANDS of extra copies of each issue and they've still been selling out. We're certainly not under printing this book to generate sellouts. We want to sell as many copies as we can. I don't think my readers need to "get a life" though... I welcome people writing in with continuity mistakes, and noticing that it doesn't snow that much in Atlanta. It makes me realize you people care, and that's a GOOD thing, in my opinion. Oh, and Plastic Man is a good title. I would have preferred losing to Sleeper (or y'know... Invincible) but Kyle Baker is talented as all get out and he deserved the award.

re: Walking Dead 9 and Spiderman UL 4

Mistah Kirkman:

These two titles demonstrate a whole lot of range on your part. With Walking Dead, you've got horror, and lots of it. That was unbelievable. You've solidified the idea that anything can happen with this book, that there are no sacred boundaries, which is the most critical element to any horror story. And with Spidey Unlimited, a short & simple story about a guy that finds true love. The neat thing was you had me wondering which girl it was with until the last page. Great job on both fronts, Robert! Odds are I'll see you in Chicago this weekend. Later!

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh

Thanks for the kind works, Ryan. Between you and Storniolo who needs that Chris Piers clown?

First I want to say what an amazing comic this is. I had been told about it over and over again and finally just gave in and bought it at #7. I don't regret it and even managed to hunt out first prints of all the back issues (expensive, but worth it). Just an amazing series that I hope doesn't end anytime soon.

Anyway, on to my question: Is there a possibility of any of the covers to be turned into posters of some sort? Some of these are absolutely gorgeous and I'd love to get a larger version. #6 in particular.

Thanks,
Tony

Jeez, Tony... if you want me to print posters of the cover you could just ASK, you don't have to write me a letter. Sheesh. We have no plans for posters at the moment but we'll see, maybe sometime down the line.

Dear Robert "Can I call you Bob?" Kirkman,

I recently enjoyed issue 9 (a big pat on the back to Tony for his most impressive cover of the series). I was thrilled to see your affirmation that the book stands a strong chance of really going the distance. The content of the issue, however, got me a thinkin' (as certain things sometimes do). See, I figured this might be a turning point for the gang, where they establish a more permanent home base for themselves. Instead, they were run out of town with extreme prejudice, courtesy of the Zombietown neighbourhood watch. I certainly don't mind unexpected twists such as this, but by the end of the book, the plot twists again like it's twisted so many times before: an established character is offed, and we see potential new additions on the horizon. Issue 9 was almost a chance for the story to evolve to the next step, and it really felt like it was time for something like that to happen, but at the end we're back to square one. Granted, the story is far from stale and there are several more issues available for progress and change to occur.

I am simply curious as to how long the narrative can remain fresh by relying on character recycling as the sole plot device. I'm not one to criticize - just wondered what your thoughts were on that. This raises a larger issue as well. As many times as you've said you want the book to hit 75+ issues, you've also stated your intention to never reveal the source of the zombies. I am aware of your reasoning on this and it makes a lot of sense. I wonder if these two goals are compatible, however. It is my understanding that the purpose of the book is to take a very protracted look at the existence of the characters post-zombieinducingdisaster, and also to be as realistic as possible. Clearly, realistically, survival would be the first goal of people in this situation. That is what the book is currently dealing with. Once that need is met however, what realistically comes next? Will the characters be satisfied with meager survival and no hope of anything more? Logically, people in this situation would want to understand the problem, and possibly look into solving it. This is because, as evidenced by droves of depressed retirees, people require purpose to be happy, much like a good story requires purpose in order to remain good. When it comes to this point, what will The Walking Dead do to give purpose to the characters and to the story, given that discussion of the zombie thing is off limits? It's probably tough to pull out an answer for that at this point, but at any rate, I just wanted to let you know that you've got me thinking about your comic book more than I think about most novels I read.

Chris Folkins
Toronto, Canada

Think about how different the first six issues have been to the current arc. This book is evolving. I'm just taking my time in these issues and having fun with it. This is not going to be a "find someplace save-kill a character-move on" book. You will be a very happy man by the end of issue 12. I have big plans for this book and I promise you it will be fresh and exciting all the way up to issue 75, then I'll run out of ideas and throw aliens into the mix... I believe that's referred to as "jumping the shark."

Letter Hacks,

Hell, that Piers guy writes all the time, I might as well too. I love this letter column. With all your exposure over at Wizard and Newsarama, exclusive (well, semi-exclusive) deal with Marvel, and growing list of books a month, you're going to get too good/busy for us and this column will be reduced to one page of gushing fans saying you're great.

Is this book going to get around to explaining the zombie apocalypse, or do you kinda figure we are all familiar with Romero and sort of know what the hell is going on? Of course, you won't give it away here, but are you planning to reveal some sort of catalyst for the change like a Venus probe, or can we leave it to genetic experiments, feminism, and voodoo mysticism?

I think we all like the direction of the book or at least the fact that there is a direction. I can't believe you killed Donna! Worse, I can't believe I didn't see that coming! It's getting clearer now that nobody but our main protagonist and his wife are safe for now. I would have included Carl but you shot him. Didn't see that coming either. Damn Kirkman, you've managed to write a non-predictable zombie story, way to go.

And hey, Piers got his NFL guy, can I be a zombie?!? Blow my head off and make me wear a nametag or something to identify me. Come on Charlie, help me out! I can't afford to fly down and be an extra for Romero.

Chris Pitts

Never fear... this letters column will always be ridiculously long and boring as all hell. No, I've mentioned it before, I DO NOT plan to EVER reveal what happened to bring the dead back to life in this book. Now, if that pisses a ton of you off... I'll change my mind. No you cannot be a zombie.

YEAH!

The book is great! I have already read all 8 issues and I'm still curious what happening. Now I want to buy all two TPB's. The psychology aspect in this comics book is marvelous! Very special thanks to writer for that! I wish you good luck!

@Blackrooster

Bloody greetings from zombie fan from Poland! Keep the faith guys!

Thanks.

Dear Mr. Kirkman (or Robert if you prefer),

Congratulations. You have created a comic that is perfect in nearly every way, a success that few comic book writers can achieve. But after reading the letters column in the back of the comic I noticed that there were a few questions that haven't been asked (and forgive me if they have because I may have missed a few).

1. When you were a child did you read comics? If so what was you're favorite?
2. What made you decide to write comics in the first place?

The next questions aren't concerning you personally but what you are doing over the next few months and such?

3. On September 11 and 12 there is a comic convention in Baltimore that you are going to be attending. Will you there all day both days? And will you be signing while you are there?

4. What comics are you most looking forward to over the next few months?

5. Finally, because you are writing a comic about zombies yourself I can't help but ask if you are at all looking forward to "Toe Tags" by George Romero?

Thank you for your time and keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Tyler S.

1. I started reading comics regularly in sixth grade. I read most of the Marvel Comics line before following all the Image guys over to Image when I was in eighth grade. McFarlane/Larsen's Spider-Man ranked as my favorite at the time, but I LOVED me some X-Force back in the day as well.

2. I wanted to do something in comics the minute I learned people did that for a living. I originally wanted to be an artist, but I suck... and I'm fairly competent at this writing stuff, and to be honest, I think it's more fun.

3. By the time this sees print I will have already returned from the Baltimore con. I shared a large table with my buddies Frank Cho and Scott Kurtz and hopefully I got to meet a few folks and get rid of some of these boxes of comics I have cluttering up my studio here at the house.

4. Shit if I know. Powers... Hawaiian Dick... Savage Dragon... Plantetary... Avengers... I read SOOOO many books.

5. Oh, yeah. I can't wait. What I've seen of it looks great.

I was in my local comic book store a couple of months ago, pretending to buy Transformers comics for my six year old, when I noticed on the shelf above was one copy of "The Walking Dead", issue 7. Being a long-time zombie fan, I decided to give it a try, raced home, shoved Transformers Energon into my son's hand (while he feebly protested, "I HAVE this issue!") and read through it quickly.

I immediately returned to the store and ordered the trade paperback, and put myself on the pre-order list for future issues.

Since I started with 7, I have absolute no quarrel with artwork. I like Moore's style, but I like Adlard's and Rathburn's work just as much. Probably more so, since it was my introduction to the series. So for me, the way the characters look from 7 on is how they're supposed to look, and adjusting the other way was difficult. But not impossible, she says, narrowly eyeing several people she knows who gripe like whiny old ladies about the "shock" and "trauma" of the infamous artwork transition.

People move on for one reason or another in all industries. It's part of life. You keep your stories coming and find good people to illustrate, and I'll keep reading. In fact, if by some horrible circumstance you find yourself without an artist, you can illustrate the story with stick figures and I'll still buy it. Or you can send me the story treatment and after I read it, I'll generously draw the stick figures myself for free!

Plot twists: I can't believe you shot Carl! (she gasps, clutching her son to her bosom). Donna, I suspected that was coming. Of course you had to show she's really a sweet person first, so it would that much more excruciating. I think Carol and Tyreese make a nice couple, but I like Glenn, too. So, please get him with somebody or have he, Carol and Tyreese come to some sort of "arrangement", if you catch my drift. I mean, damn, if Dale can score, why not Glenn?

Sorry this got so seamy, but you started it with Shane and Lori!

Stay busy...
Alison Smith

You'll be happy to see Glenn scoring in this very issue. Go Glenn. I hope you're happy, Allison. Oh, and just in case you didn't notice, Carl's fine! Woooooo!!!

And with that, I bring another ridiculously long and boring letters column to a close. I hope you folks enjoyed it. See you in a couple weeks if all goes according to plan!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello all, Sina Grace here.

Wow, what a way to end Charlie Adlard's twelfth issue as The Walking Dead artist. The great thing about revisiting this series week-in and week-out is watching his style evolve over the course of 75+ issues! Weekly!

Issue 18--the one that got away from me. This was a weird one. The way I write these things is in steps. I kick stuff around in my head for months jotting down notes here and there, then I sit down and I write a plot on paper--then I use that plot as a guideline while I type this sucker up in script form. Well, my plot for this issue and the script for this issue are almost entirely different. I had a major development planned for this issue, but the characters informed me they weren't ready--then Maggie wouldn't let me hang Hershel, then Dexter and Andrew wouldn't leave without a fight. It's hard to explain--I had things planned out--but as I typed the dialogue things changed, the characters took over and things went in other directions. It was kind of scary.

I hope it turned out okay. At least it looks pretty.

This wraps up the "Safety Behind Bars" arc and ends it with a cliffhanger (tee hee). Starting next month--more of the same!

Oh, and our letters page will be cut short this month to make room for the much requested character pages that will follow this letters page. HOORAY. Speaking of letters:

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am becoming more impressed with your ability to develop characters than I thought possible.

The bitterness between Rick and Lori adds even more tension to an already fragile situation and makes Lori a bit of an antagonist. I'm anxious to see how serious she was when she said, "I'm sick of him." I also found it poignant that Rick felt the need to reconcile with Shane. In every zombie/apocalypse story I've always wanted as much detail as possible, especially what was going through the minds of the individuals and that would motivate them.

Regarding motivation, what have you got against poor Herschel? His kids are getting whacked left and right. You're for guns right? And since Herschel is anti-gun you're making his life even more miserable. That's fine by me. I'd rather have a gun and not need it, than...you get the picture.

It's an interesting "who-dunnit" you've added as well. It's a matter of who knew where the barber-shop was and when they knew it. Inmates are first up obviously. And I'd mention the other character's by name, but they escape me. In time though, I'm sure the more you develop them (rather than whacking them left and right) I'll remember them as easily as Rick, Lori, and Herschel. Now that this is my second letter, I'll return to comic-book letter format, with questions.

1) Communication. Hasn't anyone at that prison thought of checking out a radio/transmitter to try to find out

what's going on in the rest of the world? Electricity is the only thing holding them back. Nearly all modern prisons have on-line access even.

2) Is Rick planning on returning to his hometown to invite the man and his son to comeback with him? I thought that was the first place he would head after going and getting Herschel and his family.

3) Everyone has been asking for one-shots to add to the back story. Have you considered introducing a new character by first starting with their back story (i.e. from the moment "all hell broke loose/to the present")?

4) Television. I'm sure you've seen the previews for "Sin City" and "A Scanner Darkly," or even seen "Sky Captain..." If you had final say on design for a television series based on TWD would you prefer those styles of "live-action" animation, or simply black & white & greys?

I'm really starting to enjoy the greys as much as the penciling. Too bad I can't remember the guys name who does that (I'm not typing this at home). But give him credit anyway.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

1) The haven't found a radio yet. Give them time. They really haven't had a chance to explore the prison at all.

2) It's a long way away--but it's not out of the question.

3) I don't really want to dilute the property with spin-offs. I'm not really into cashing in. Give me another month or so...

4) I'd prefer live action--it just seems more real.

Cliff appreciates the compliment, even though you forgot his name.

I've been reading The Walking Dead since issue 10. I bought the first trade and all other issues I could find to catch up.

I've been reading comics since 92' when I was 9, so I'm not going to lie to you and tell you this is first letter I wrote to a comic, but if it's printed or if I actually get a response than that will be a first for sure. (Though when I was 12 or possibly 13 I had it figured out, letters written to comic books go to the same place letters written to Santa go and haven't written a letter since.) I love the book, I really do, but I'm also not going to sit here and enumerate the reasons why, I think it would sully it somehow.

I will say that it is the reason I have a pull list at my comic book shop. Before this title came out I had no trouble getting an issue of anything, and now this sucker comes out and I have to get a pull list or else I'll miss an issue. Also, because of this book I've added Invincible and Marvel Team-Up to my pull list. My shop never seems to get Brit In, but I'm dying to read it. I read an interview someone did with you (It was linked by Tycho and Gabe (I don't know their real name... that's right nested parenthesis... it's a code monkey geek thing) of Penny-Arcade after they met you at a convention in

Seattle.) and it sparked my interested in that book but I can't find it anywhere, which is depressing.

Brit isn't currently being published but the three books that have been out for a while are available for sale at www.khepri.com so they should be relatively easy to find.

I am quite shocked that no one has pointed out that you have the best letters column in all of comicdom. I'm pretty sure it's the best letters column in my entire history of reading comic books. It's amazing that you are able to publish and actually answer that many letters in a month. Reading all of those letters takes me forever, but I'm determined to do it every month. Between the letters and covers I'll never settle for another TPB.

That's the idea.

Don't ever do color. Never. I somehow managed to convince my art teacher to let me do an independent study where I draw a comic book. Nothing fancy, nothing I'm ever going to try and sell, just something I'll put up on my website just so I could say I did it. Anyway she asked me to bring in samples of B&W comic book art I liked so I brought her Sin City and The Walking Dead. (Samples of both Moore and Adlard) She asked me what I liked about the Walking Dead, and I told her "I like that it's pretty... and has zombies... cause zombies rock." I tried to convince her she should read it but once I started explaining the storyline to her she just looked at me like I was weird... more so than she normally does, which when you are dealing with a hippie art teacher is really quite the accomplishment. Consequently - in case you were wondering - when she asked me what I liked about Sin City and I told her, "I like that it's not pretty."

In response to a letter I read in Issue 15:
See Simon Pegg isn't actually rich. When he writes you telling you that he's making millions and billions, well that's a desperate cry for help cause he's actually poor. You have to realize that when you take American dollars and convert them to British pounds a million American dollars is the equivalent of roughly 45 pounds or something. That's hardly enough to buy a video game. Poor guy. I hear he is supposedly making a sequel to Shaun of the Dead though so yay for that. I totally need to get a cricket bat now because of that movie.

Don't let his appearance fool you. That limey brit is RICH!

In response to a letter I read in Issue 16:
Bikers are good people, not all of them are alcoholics. From age 7 on up I would hang out with my uncle's biker gang and most of them wouldn't touch booze, so much so they had their monthly meetings at donut shops and drank coffee. He was in a biker gang comprised of Vietnam Vets, and trust me when I say these guys could survive an apocalypse. If they could survive a war I'm sure they could survive an apocalypse longer than most. I highly doubt they'd turn into dicks afterwards and start gutting people for no reason.

You've been duped. I'm telling you. That WASN'T coffer and those WEREN'T donuts. Show me a sober biker and I'll show you a leprechaun.

This might seem a little scatterbrained, but I'm trying to get a lot of ideas out here, I've been meaning to write you for a while but I think that's everything. You keep writing, I'll keep buying and reading.

- Jesse Mrozowski

So I'm responding INSIDE the letters now. BIG DEAL. The way Bendis does it in Powers makes the letters and responses really easy to follow. There's nothing wrong with copying his style. It works for Brubaker.

Hey Robert!
I know we've already talked several times but here's a formal note for your Letter Hacks column. TWD is, after all, my current favourite comic and has been since the first issue so it's about time I wrote in. First off, I should say on record that you've got one of the most solid stories about the living dead that I've read since Matheson's I Am Legend. High praise indeed but you've earned it because you've got an engaging story and then you have gore, in that order, something a great deal of

filmmakers and writers are sorely misunderstanding these days. And yes, I know I Am Legend is about vampires but it is the genesis of all modern zombie movies since George Romero has openly stated he stole the idea for Night of the Living Dead from Matheson's novel. It's about the dead coming back to life inexplicably and infecting and consuming the living, now let's move on.

So if Romero stole from Matheson and I'm stealing from Romero...that makes it okay... doesn't it?

Storytelling is all about character. I Am Legend is about Robert Neville. The undead are, of course, a massive part of it, but they are secondary to the one human element. Now, don't get me wrong, my license plate says ZOMBIES and I have a Day of the Dead tattoo sleeve on my entire right arm and I love gore more than the average person but zombie tales are, ahem, brainless unless you care about the characters. In fact, there was an entire issue without any zombie action at all and I daresay anyone even noticed; that's the sign of a solid story. This would also be the difference between Romero's Dawn of the Dead and Snyder's MTV-style, undead epileptic fit of a remake. The latter boasts too many one-line-spouting fist-magnets that no one could give a fuck about whereas, in Romero's flick, the audience genuinely freaked when Roger got his leg chomped climbing into the truck with Peter, for example.

Your book succeeds where Snyder's movie didn't in my opinion, it manages to introduce new characters frequently, but you seem to always understand their purpose. Or maybe you don't and figure it out as you go along, but nevertheless, no characters are ever wasted. **(I think you're forgetting Rachel and Susie)** And when they are, they're wasted in style! **(oh, never mind)** I should say, whoever this slasher is that's decapitating little girls in your comic at the moment echoes another brand of horror beyond the zombie sub-genre and, quite frankly, I'm surprised and very pleased about it. In a world that's overrun by monsters, they're trapped inside with the human variety - the most unsettling kind. Very nice.

My point is, your book is never predictable and more fun than any zombie movie I've seen since Day of the Dead, and that's saying a lot, since the competition's been heavy and Day of the Dead is the Mount Rushmore of zombie flicks. In short, Right. The. Fuck. On.

Love and buckets of blood,

Jovanka (Jen) Vuckovic
Managing Editor
RUE MORGUE MAGAZINE

Good to hear from you, Jen. I've gotta say I disagree. I think Shaun of the Dead is the most fun, entertaining, and compelling zombie ANYTHING since Day of the Dead. Although, I think you may be a bit more of an expert on the subject, so what do I know?

Hi bob

You sly goose! After reading the end of Walking Dead 16 it surprised me that Thomas WAS the murderer, I thought it would have been too obvious for it to be him but there it was. I also suspected Dale since he decapitated a zombie with a axe in issue 3 and lost his wife before he was introduced but he looks to be just what he is a generous elderly old man.

It's good that you have no plans to show any origin to the plague because that is besides the point, the point should always be story and characters it would be good to hear their theories though its likely they'd asked why in the beginning.

I am really pleased you made it clear that ALL deceased with brain matter turn into zombies, thanks to Resident Evil, 28 Days Later and Dawn Remake people always assume its a infectious plague passed on by bites. I think it starts out where all the dead rise and then months or years later, the zombies still exist, their bites still turn you but the dead stay as good old inanimate corpses.

Dan

See, I was right--it was so obvious... I fooled you. Sigh. I'll try harder next time--I promise.

Man!

It's fun to be following a monthly book again. I haven't had any comics to look forward to on a regular basis since I was maybe 14. So you had to go and make it the accountant. I had my heart set on some vicious serial-killer type hiding out in another wing of the prison just collecting zombie heads for company. Oh well. Please please please, when the bandits or other living bad-guys or whoever

(bikers are kind of played out, though) show up, give them weird zombie-body-part trophies. Like necklaces of animate heads. That would be fucked up. Talk to Adlard about it. I wanna see him draw that. Speaking of Adlard, the last page of issue 15 was one of the single most affecting images in the series so far, as good as the panel where Rick and Glenn go into Atlanta and encounter all those zombies piled around the tank. I remember his X-Files work. He's gotten incredible. So some quick, conveniently numbered suggestions for how you should be doing your job (besides the above)-

1. Can we see a zombie Donna? Or is there enough of her left?
2. Child Zombies. I think I saw one in #16, but it could've been a midget...
3. Give Carl more opportunities to use his gun. He's a good shot.
4. Seriously, the popular demand seems to be mounting. Have the guys loot an abandoned Wal-Mart.
5. Kill off somebody important soon. In the shittiest way possible. I mean it. Make us all cry.

Thanks for the legitimate reason to start hanging around comic shops again.

Ian Dennis,

1. This isn't the kind of book where dead characters keep popping up as zombies. Who KNOWS what happened to Donna...or Jim. I'd rather not see them again.

2. They're around... you just have to keep an eye out for them.

3. That kid's just lucky. He'll be shooting his gun again, eventually.

4. We'll see.

5. Tyreese falls in the Sarlac pit next issue, promise.

Dear Funk Gang,

I climbed on board the walking dead bandwagon with issue # 8. Now that I am up to issue # 16, it's still great to be on board. Great artwork, covers, and stories in them all!

I would like to talk briefly about the covers by Tony Moore. From an artistic point-of-view, I feel that issues 8, 9, and 16 are the best so far. Issue #8; You show us the effect of ice and snow on zombies. I cannot recall any media, including movies and comics, that deals with this area. Very nice thoughts! By the way, the simple, open design of this cover caught my eye on the comic rack. Issue #9: A reflection in a zombie eye-beautiful idea! The eye is scratched, glazed over, covered with decay and a big fly....yummy! It looks like Rick is getting sneaked up from behind by this zombie. Issue # 16: Best illustration of zombies...period! I noticed something usually forgotten in Zombie drawings. The fingers, fingernails, teeth, mouth, and upper shirt are covered in a brownish, reddish color. This means they found some previously "alive" folk sometime in the past to munch on...nice inclusion. The rest of their bodies are done well with pale blue skin and pale eyes. I loved the details of flies swarming them too.

As far as the artwork inside (by Charlie)...wonderful! Charlie's work in issue #16 is showing some new twists. More facial expressions, viewpoints, and even more contrasts. He is really starting to find his niche and personalize these characters. I love it.

As far as Thomas Richards being the, um, "head-cutter" in #16...no surprise there Robert. It's always the quiet, polite ones, ain't it? He wasn't in prison for tax fraud was he... probably more like serial killing? Just goes to show Rick's gang probably should do a more thorough background check next time before staying with a new group.

Let's hope...

I always get worried that the stories will get boring and I will lose interest in buying new ones. This has almost happened a few times. The group starts talking (blah,blah,blah), the group gets angry at each

other(blah,blah,blah!), someone gets killed (ho-hum). Some new ideas come in though to keep me reading... yeah! In short, keep up the good work. Okay....now for some interesting thoughts:

1. Even if zombies could happen, rigormortis (which is where the blood pools up in the lowest part of the body after death because it no longer pumps through the body's system) would set in. This means the muscles would seize up and eventually lose all mobility. Sorry guys...no moving zombie is possible.

1. You can't pick and choose what's realistic and what's not. In my book once the dead is up and walking, it's all thrown out the window. Who KNOWS how that works. Rigormortis doesn't seem to be a problem.

2. When you get to issue # 75 and start to write in the purple aliens with laser beams, don't forget the other nice suggestions: A. Talking Owls B. Invincible "crossovers" C. Tyreese flying like a helicopter In fact, put them all in a wrestling ring "death match" with a tag team of zombies. My money is on the talking owls....that would be a "hoot" if they win.

2. A "hoot!" GROAN! Actually, I think the suggestion was Tyreese FLYING a helicopter, but seeing him fly LIKE a helicopter seems much more interesting. I am counting the days until issue 75.

3. I guess I am the only one who bought the "Dawn of the Dead" remake. Zombie's that run? Zombie's that climb and jump? Zombies that increase in population to thousands and thousands? Now that's really scary! C'mon, admit it...you guys feel these new zombies would upset your "fantasy world". No more walking around and shooting slow witted zombies and raiding shopping malls at leisure. Too bad!

Till the next zombie attack.....

Tracy Kent

3. You don't have a chance with running zombies. It's better if the hero has a chance. I don't HATE running zombies, I just prefer the slow ones. Besides, how would they move that well with rigormortis and all that?

Dear Robert,

Well, first we get the general praise out of the way. I jumped on board with the first two trades (bought them both together, thanks to their fabulously low price), and I've bought every issue since. It has bumped Ex Machina from my favorite slot, and has inserted itself firmly into my all time favorite list. Every issue I've read has evoked a strong emotional response from me, something that is becoming increasingly rare across all forms of storytelling. Your dialogue is masterful, and "sounds" very real.

Now, on to more specific praise. Issue #16, while not my favorite (issue #14 holds that honor), was still absolutely fantastic. I was happy beyond words to see that Tyreese survived, and his speech about his daughter nearly brought a tear to my eye. I was also "pleased" to see that I had guessed the identity of the decapitator correctly. (COME ON, who DIDN'T?) I knew that creepy Thomas was up to no good the moment I laid eyes on him. I guess I should be used to these heart stopping cliffhangers by now, but they keep catching me off guard.

Special kudos to you for your excellent characterization. Most people will list Tyreese or Rick as their favorites, but mine go a little more offbeat. My faves are Carl and Sophia. The scene where Sophia asks Carl to be her boyfriend was so cute it made me physically weak.

I bet you like Disney movies too, don't you?

Please keep up the great book, I'll buy it for as long as you keep cranking them out.

-Brian Clark
Chicago, IL

P.S. - Lighten up on Herschel, will you? You've been a real son a bitch to him.

Hershel's almost out of kids, so one way or another he's bound to stop losing them y'know? I think things will be looking up for Hershel real soon, but

that's probably a lie.

Dear Letter Hacks,

I was out of the comic book world for about 10 years until I picked up Wizard Magazine 160 and read their article on TWD. That weekend, I made the trip into town to see if the local comics store had any issues. The kid behind the counter handed me both the paper trades. I read them both that night, fell in love with the story, the art and the characters. Later that week, I read them again at work. I proceeded to go back to the store, bought issue 14, ordered 13 and signed up to have the book pulled for me when they come out.

I can honestly say that I am hooked and find myself wondering what will happen next. I have my roommate hooked and even the girlfriend is reading the book now.

The art in this book is like none I have ever experienced before. When the action hits I find myself reading faster. When the book slows, I read slower. I can really make a connection.

One thing I don't understand is why Hershel is getting such a hard time from your readers? There the guy is, on his own property, wife gone, an undead son in the barn, 10 mouths to feed, a limited amount of food and his not so bright neighbor shoots some kid. He did what was morally right in the situation and saved his life. He even allowed a group of very hungry strangers stay on his property, feeding them, and keeping them relatively safe while the boy healed up. Then they have a zombie wander by and the hotshot cop wants to kill it while Hershel believes that it can be saved. The man proceeds to lose two more of his kids and if that's not enough the hotshot cop thinks he's a permanent resident and start making demands to just move in on the food and family that Hershel has obviously worked his whole life to attain.

See, Hershel's not a bad guy. I think he's got more than enough reader sympathy these days, though.

I really felt for the guy and never thought that Rick and his group were welcome the whole time. Why they thought they were, seemed a bit selfish.

I like how Hershel managed to bounce back mentally, apologize to Rick and decided to come to the prison with everyone. He even starts to work on the soil to plant food to feed everyone. Then the guy loses two more children. I'm surprised the poor guy hasn't snapped yet! I love the Hershel character, he seems like one of the more realistic of the bunch, I hope he's around for a while. Someone has to think long term and he knows how to grow food, I hope the others realize this.

A couple questions...

1) Why doesn't anyone seem to think about using propane grills? We always see people building a fire to cook their food or just not cooking at all. Propane grills and propane should be easy to find and it's a great way to cook. You'd think that there would have been one on the camper...

Dale was all out of propane and they haven't been able to find more.

2) Why don't we see people reading more educational books? I know that if I were in the situation I would be trying to find as much information as I could that may come in useful. Survival guides, farming, delivering a baby, first aid, etc.

They haven't found a bookstore yet--if only the prison had a library...

3) Are they going to make an ammo run anytime soon? When Rick and Glen made their run into Atlanta, they filled up a shopping cart and had to ditch that. How many guns and how much ammo could they really carry while running for their lives? Then they had to teach everyone how to shoot, which would have eaten up all kinds of ammo. You touched on this after they cleared their way into prison, but they have got to be almost out of bullets.

Keep up the great work!

Thanks,
Mike Gineman

3) They are, in fact, almost out of bullets, which I think has been mentioned a couple times by now. Although, if you're recall, Glenn and Rick made it out of Atlanta with most of the ammo they took.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I just got into comics last year, when I picked up some trades on a whim. I heard a lot of great things about the Walking Dead, and ended up buying the first two trades in December. I inhaled them, and have been reading the individual issues since 13, anxiously awaiting my next fix. You had me worried with issue 15, leaving me hanging on the fate of my favorite character, Tyreese. Thankfully you gave him the coolest moment so far in the series when Rick finds him in issue 16. I was a little disappointed that you revealed the killer so soon, I was looking forward to the tension building as more people are dying and accusations are flying. However I'm completely confident that the direction you're taking the story will be far more exciting.

Like many other fans I was a little disappointed in Charlie Adlard's replacement of Tony Moore. At first glance Adlard's art seems simpler and duller. However over these past 10 issues with Adlard on board, I have come to really appreciate his storytelling abilities. Take for example issue 14, bottom half of page 4, where the inmates are confessing their crimes. With these four panels Adlard is able to fully convey each of the inmates' personalities. In fact the way he draws their eyes pretty much sums them up. That is talent.

I have a couple of questions on the series, hopefully they haven't already been asked:

1. Any chance of Adlard, Rathburn, or Moore making an appearance in Letter Hacks, commenting on and answering questions related to the art?

These things are done so last minute it would be impossible to grab them on a whim, but if there were ever a specific question for them I'd probably hunt them down for an answer.

2. How much of what you have planned for the characters and story do you share with your artists? Are they finding out as they receive your scripts, or do you tell them everything you have planned?

I chat with Charlie and Cliff on the phone about the grand scheme of things from time to time. They know most of the big stuff that's going to happen. Most of the little stuff that happens in the issues isn't even known to me until I finish the script so they're not kept in the dark very long.

3. Which deceased character would you most like to still be able to write about?

Isaac Milton

I have no regrets. I liked Jim a lot, but hey... it was his time to go.

And that's it for letters folks! I hope you're happy, because I finally sat down and made those goddamn character sheets for you. Now you can totally look at characters faces and see their names under them. I probably won't be running this every issue, because taking up six pages in every issue with this seems kinda stupid, but we'll be running updated versions from time to time. ENJOY!

See you next month!

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Big news time here at The Walking Dead Central. The Eisners were very kind to us this year. The book received not one but two nominations. One to Charlie Adlard as best penciler/inker and one to Tony Moore for best cover artist. These guys bust their humps all year long and both really deserve these nominations, congrats, guys.

In other news, I've been trying to keep a lid on this, because, well, I got letters about it... complaining, but I just got numbers and we're still going up, we haven't stopped going up... this book just keeps selling better. As I stated before I don't say this to brag, I just say this because I know, the only readers that actually read this, care, you guys like the book. I figure you guys would like to know that the book you enjoy is on solid ground. So I just wanted to let you know. Now back to your regularly scheduled program.

Oh, and before I start into the mail I gotta say, I recently signed up for "Blockbuster Online" the mail order DVD rental thing... and it's totally sweet! As a guy who really doesn't think to highly of leaving the house the future sure is turning out pretty cool. Between khepri.com, Amazon.com, Ebay, and this... and my wife buying groceries... I almost never need to leave the house. I'm a shut in! WOO!

Letters? Yeah, sure--we'll answer some of those... let's go.

Dear Dead Crew,

Wow! What else can you possibly throw at us? (I probably shouldn't have asked that)

Your book has the best characterizations that I've read in a long time. Characters are what give every great comic, novel and film staying power, something you can read or watch over and over again. Like with Romero's Dawn of the Dead, all the fans will tell you they watched it a hundred times because of Peter, Roger, Flyboy, and Fran. People actually cared what happened to them, and because it kicks ass all over today's cardboard cutouts. I read the Walking Dead every month anticipating what is going to happen to Rick and the Gang every month. Rich is definitely the headliner, but without everyone else the book wouldn't be as exciting, compelling nor as interesting. Hell, with the good writing you could put a chimp in the lead role and still sell crazy amounts of the book. Your characters are worth remembering.

I have just a few questions for you guys,

- 1.) What books inspired you guys to get into comics?
- 2.) Who is your favorite Romero actor?
- 3.) Any good convention horror stories?

Robert- keep up the awesome writing, and I love reading Letter Hacks, don't ever get rid of em'.

Charlie- top of the line, you bring the writing to life(or dead)

Tony-BAD ASS Covers!

Thanks putting out a quality book,

Gary Timmons

Bear
Lake, MI

Thanks for the letter, Gary.

- 1.) Charlie's busy, but for me it was Savage Dragon, hands down. I mean all comics in general helped but if I had to pick one... it'd be Dragon. That's just a GREAT comic book. And fuck that guy for become publisher of Image so I look like a kiss up when I say that.
- 2.) Duane Jones, from Night of the Living Dead... followed closely by Ken Foree, and an honorable mention goes to Tony Todd for the Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake.
- 3.) Nah, nothing crazy's every happened to me.

Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

First, let me get past the obligatory cliché of longtime reader, first time writer. I was a kid when I first saw the original Dawn of the Dead, and I've been a zombie fan ever since. I've never cared for the zombies that ask you if they can eat your brains, so those movies never did much for me, and there's been somewhat of a hole where that genre should've been in my life. I somewhat enjoyed the new Dawn of the Dead, as well as 28 Days Later, but still couldn't get past how bodies that were decomposing could pull off a full sprint. That's where TWD comes in. I gave it a chance with issue #1, and I've gotten every issue and collection ever since. I love the idea of the 'zombie movie' never ending. TWD has been a shot of much needed fun, and I've since completed my DVD collection of zombie movies as well as The Zombie Survival Guide, all of which rest with my collection of TWD. Thank you for that.

A couple of questions - First off, What (or Who) exactly is in the prison freezer? With your past storylines, I can't seriously believe that it was just used as the crapper. It's been four issues since they slickly avoided opening that door, and the anticipation of that answer is killing me.

Oh, come on... sometimes a cigar is just a cigar. It was a crapper... they pooped in the freezer. There's just nothing more to it. Sorry.

Secondly, when will you do us all a favor and revive Marvel's Nova? It appears that you're somewhat of a fan, and I'm curious if you're interested in doing Nova correctly, and if you've considered approaching Marvel about it?

I dig Nova a lot and I'd love to do a Nova series some day. Right now though, Zeb Wells and Scottie Young have a New Warriors series going on that features the ol' human rocket. Check it out.

Aloha and keep up the great work,
Gordon Fernandez

P.S. - This is a work email address, so if this letter is printed, could you please omit the address? I'm not a

full
time writer yet, and
I still desperately need this job. :)

The address is omitted. Your job is safe. But really--you think your boss is reading this?

Oh captain my captain,

I am another of the "new to comics" people if you don't count the one I owned at 13. Well I am a little let down by the end of #16. Thomas was a dead give away as the killer. He looks like an older Jeffery Dahmer. Another thing is that if there are zombies outside the fence why don't the people stab them in the head with sharpened homemade weapons through the fence?

Well, that came up a couple issues later... see, my finger's on the pulse.

They are in a prison there has to be a shiv there somewhere. Also my other beef is with Charlie. Charlie is getting much better as the comic grows but it seems as if all the zombies are all bald guys. It is looking like a chrome dome convention.

Bah, Charlie's doing fine. Some zombie's are bald, but not all... take a look, you'll see tons of non-bald zombies.

All right I have beaten you up enough, time for the praise. I thank you and as well as a chorus of others. This is a terrific story. I look forward to this every month. I have even gotten two of my high school math students hooked on the Kirkman crack as I like to call it. I gave them a taste of TPB one and two and after told them they would have to get there own if they want more. I am following your model. You are also a shrewd businessman. You start with the prices low and when they are hooked then you got them where you want them. Then Rob, you do the letters column to stretch out the experience. You sure you didn't sell drugs in a past life. At the website I post www.allthingszombie.com you are the second most viewed thread on the site. Sorry Romero's "Land of the Dead" is number one. Many members join and yours is the thread they post.

Right now we are taking dibs on who is swinging in #18. We think it is a toss up between Hershel and Andrew. I call dibs on Hershel; the guy has lost five kids. He has got to be F&*%ed. Another member and I are making an index of people on The Walking Dead to help those confused by which character is which. If you want, take a look and tell us what you think. It is at awfulman.mine.nu/twd/

Well a letter wouldn't be complete without questions.

1) Are you wallowing in money from Paramount's Invincible buy?

2) If there are so many rotten corpses running out there wouldn't the be an pandemic of flies around? (Feel free to cut his out if you want to use the idea)

3) There seem to be more and more scenes like Dale\Andrea, Lori\Carol, prison shower. Does death make them horny or is it me?

Sincerely,

Gary Skellington

1) Not really. I could always use more money.

2) Man, I know I've gotten this question before... there're flies out there... we'll see them.

3) It's... just... you.

Hello again, Kirkman,

I just read TWD 16, and you just keep making this book better and better! There's so much going on now, it's hard to keep it all

straight. Not that I'm complaining or anything...

I'm glad to see we're finally getting to learn about the convicts a bit. We've got the pervy one, the psycho one, and the two gay ones (one of which I'm sure will go straight again). You had me kind of lulled me into a sense of security about them until the end of last issue. I guess it's naive of me, but I got the feeling that

even
though they were convicts, they wouldn't pose a big threat to the others. After all, in their current situation, what would they have to gain by killing off the few people that were remaining in the world? Now that we know Thomas is the one chopping heads off, I'm interested to find out what his motivation is. Does he think he'll benefit from what he's doing, or is he just mentally disturbed? Now that we know he's the attacker, I'm sure the rest of the cast will find out soon enough. I'm guessing Dexter, who everyone accused of killing Hershel's girls, will end up saving the day for the rest of them, building their trust in him, but maybe you'll surprise me.

Speaking of heads being chopped off, I have to commend Charlie on his art on page 3. I loved the subtle movement of the girls' eyes before they started trying to talk. That was just magnificent!

And Tyreese somehow survived?!? That was certainly unexpected. I certainly thought he wanted to die the way he ran right into the center of a roomful of zombies. I can't imagine how he survived. I know he's told Rick that he doesn't really know how he did it, but I'm hoping it'll come back to him, and we might get a chance to see it through a flashback or something. I think that would be a great scene to see!

Then, to top it all off, we get some sweet lesbo action! Is Lori going to cheat on Rick again, only with a woman this time?!? I know there wasn't much to it, but I still thought it was an interesting little scene to throw in there. I can't help but think there was a reason for it, and it's a precursor of things to come.

I also enjoyed the page toward the end where Tyreese explains to Rick how all of them are dead. I know you've explained in the letters page that the title doesn't refer to the zombies, but it was nice to see the characters recognizing the same thing within the story. Tyreese has a completely different attitude toward their situation than I thought he did when Julie died. It's nice to see him back and know that he has a firm grip on their reality.

Finally, in your letters page you said the characters are going to try to figure out how everyone is turning into zombies. I'm really looking forward to that! I can't wait to see what kinds of ideas they come up with and learn along with them what the "rules" are in your world.

The characters are going to learn the zombie "rules" as they go along but they'll never find out how... at least, that's the plan.

Thanks for another great read! Keep up the good work!

Jim Amato

PS - I'm interested in some of Charlie Adlard's original art. You said you could forward our e-mail to Charlie, so please send mine. I'd like to see what he's got available and how much it costs... I'm sure he's gotten lots of inquiries on it, so he may not have much left. Thanks!

If you want to buy Charlie's original art, email me the address above with "original art" in the subject. When they're at the bottom of a normal letter like this one... I won't see it until I put this letters column together. If you put that in the subject I'll forward the request right on to Charlie.

Dear Robert-

Your comic book "The walking dead" rocks! Its truly awesome!

But riddle me this...why isn't it mentioned on

the image comics web site? And why aren't the ship dates mentioned anywhere? Bummer!

Dude, keep up the awesome work!

Jonz

I guess the Image site just sucks! Seriously though... there's some stuff on there some times... including my message board, check it out.

Robert,
Charlie, Cliff... etc.

I just wanted to finally write to my favorite comic to say thanks. I have been waiting for a story like this for my entire zombie obsessed life. Let me get a few things out the way real quick before I get to the heart of the matter.

Robert: I was so pissed off when you "killed" Tyreese ONE ISSUE after you said you wouldn't be killing anybody off for awhile in Letter Hacks. Well I guess the joke was on me since you got exactly the reaction I am sure you were hoping for. Oh well, fool me once... well you know the rest.

HAH! Got you.

Charlie: I have to admit that I didn't like your initial start on this book. It was quite a shock going from one style to another and that is one of my biggest beefs with most "mainstream" comics (who seem to switch artists every other month). Looking back at those issues now I can see just how hard you were trying to make the world come to life in your own way. I didn't notice all the little things going on in the background of many issues until I re-read them. Now I can honestly say that I really like your work and I hope you stick around for some time to come. Your zombies are great... gory, rotten, bloated, and horrid! Everything I need out of the walking dead!

Cliff: I don't think I have ever seen anyone give you the respect you deserve for your excellent work in gray. It gives the entire book a sense of depth, gloom, and despair that might otherwise be lacking without. Keep up the excellent addition to this already excellent comic and everything will be .. uhm .. excellent.

Now to my question. Since I know many intelligent zombie fans read this thing and I have yet to see any real discussion... this has to do with a Romero classic. My favorite of the trilogy (and maybe of all zombie films) is Day Of The Dead. It gets so many things right, especially in the characters it portrays. But while discussing the movie recently with a coworker we both stumbled on something. Romero likes to work in civil rights undertones in all of the Dead pictures, but we had a hard time figuring out what it was in Day Of The Dead. Then we realized it was the character of Pvt. Miguel. Everyone assumes he was dating or sleeping with Sarah in that movie, because they shared a room, but what if he was actually gay? Maybe that is why the rest of the men in the complex had such a distaste for him, and Sarah was smart enough to let him stay in her room as a disguise. At the end of the film we see him clutching his rosary beads and crucifix as he is torn apart by zombies who then destroy the remaining men alive in the complex. He was in so much denial and anguish over his homosexuality and it's sins against god that he finally gave himself over to his retribution. Sure this all seems a little out there, but so are a lot of things in the film. If you are still not convinced just think back to the scene where Miguel slaps Sarah across the face and says, "You bitch!!"

Y'know... most of the time when people do this they end up sounding like a real crackpot... but y'know... I think this kinda makes sense. I'm going to have to watch the movie again with this in mind. Thanks.

Well I hope it gives you something to think about if nothing else. Actually maybe you should just get back to work on creating this awesome comic for me to read every month. Leave it up to the fans and readers to argue about this one.

Randall Davis

Dear Robert:

Hi - huge zombie-aholic here. Although I've been a fan of comics for over 20 years now, I have never written in before. (Bullshit, of course you have... liar.) Your book has made me change that...I can't even begin to

explain the excitement I get from reading your book. I am happy to say that I have been a reader since issue #1 hit the rack and haven't had to go through too much torture of tracking down a back issue - that is until I went out to sea for a few months. Our Strike Group headed out in October and I was forced to wait around until March to see where TWD was going. Needless to say, it was well worth the wait...the newest storyline about the prison is your best stuff yet. The only good thing about being gone for 5 months is that I can get to read 4 issues all in one sitting.

I have to admit, when Rick went back to take out Shane (again), I thought he also might have it in mind to try and track down Morgan and Duane and getting the only other people he had met into the 'good life' of the prison...looks

like he's got other things to worry about now.

Keep up the great work and I'll be sure and do my part to spread the word to other comic readers...now if I can just get the comic book store folks to quit referring to me as 'the walking dead' guy...

v/r,
LT Allen Adkins, USN

Right on.

Letter Hacks,

This is the first time I've ever written to a comic. Well, except for all those other times. (see, that's what I'm talking about.)

You've established in Invincible that there are parallel Earths, right? And in Invincible's Earth, there's that bloke who looks like Richard E Grant's Doctor Who living in the sewers and animating corpses, with limited success. So it stands to reason that on one of the parallels, Richard E Grant is a bit more successful; to the point that he's managed to accidentally create a zombie apocalypse!

See? Total crackpot.

And you said that you'd never go into the cause of the zombie plague. The clues were there all the time! You cunning scamp, you!

Even though I've now resoundingly busted open the central mystery, I'm still loving the comic. It's truly a great read. One question though: the gang are worried about running out of ammo and weapons, but they're in a prison in the US. Surely there's going to be guns and ammo lying around all over the shop, or was this a fuzzy liberal prison in which the guards were only armed with stern words and good intentions? Surely the copper should have thought of this by now?

Oh, and have you thought about digest-sized collections? I know your books are around the same price as the manga collections anyway, but you might get some crossover success from the otaku. Plus it's fashionable, innit?

kelvin green

Eh, I don't really want to have two different kind of collections out there. Digest-sized trades are fine but I really like full-sized comics... I like to keep the format alive.

Hello Richard, I'm Phill and I love the series! I love how you take a bad situation and make it so much worse in the story. When are you going to make it to any Florida ComicCons? I would love to meet the man who brought us the comic fanboys one of the best zombie series that has hit the comic book shelves. You give me a reason to go and still buy comic titles. I'm not here to bash but I lost alot of respect for major comic companies such as Marvel and DC with some of their hair-brained ideas to spicen up some of their already existing titles. Anyways, you brought us a title we can build with and keeps us hungry for more. Good job and thank you for bringing me back to the world of comics,

Your Faithful read,
Phill

Florida, eh? My parents live down there... I'm sure I'll make it down there on an official capacity sooner or later. If any con promoters are reading this... EMAIL me.

Mr. Kirkman,

I thought it was about time I wrote to say just how much we think of your wonderful comic. My wife and I are avid readers of comics, collecting between 30 and 40 titles a month. Yours is one of the best, and you're in good company too. I'd rather chew my right hand off than pick between Rex Mundi, Y The last man, and Walking dead.

We didn't pick up right away. With reading so many books on our pull list already and past geek books never really panning out, we were skeptical. However all the new geek movies out (28 Days Later, Shaun Of The

Dead, and Dawn Of The Dead), reminded us of our love for the genre and we folded. I picked up the first trade and half way into the first issue I was hooked. After reading it through in one setting, I promptly handed it to my wife and suggested she stop whatever she was doing to read this book, ASAP. Since then we've gotten caught up, now reading monthly.

What zombie fan hasn't wondered what this kind of world would be like day in, day out? What zombie fan hasn't fantasized about their own world gone dead, you're main concern just staying alive, hour to hour? This excellent work takes us far beyond what any movie ever has, exploring a world of the dead in a way no other medium could. Well displayed is the uncertainty of such a world. We never know who's going to die from issued to issue. It's safe to say the majority of characters are fair game. I think you have a story to tell about Rick and he'll be around for a while, but I'm not all that certain you won't axe him, when his story plays out. The monthly cliffhangers are hell and we love them!

An interesting point to note is your willingness to print the names of and talk about other comics in your letter pages. Something most books will not do. I think this shows your love of comics and comfort level with your own work. BTW, kudos on your huge letters page as it's almost as fun to read as the book itself. Your dedication to not whoring your work by expansion simply for monetary gain is admirable as well.

Yeah, I hope you fuckers like this shit because I'm not even half way don't and I've been doing this for over an hour. You bastards BETTER like these things.

Your hard work and imagination have earned you two more loyal readers. We're not going anywhere, we want to see how it ends (not too abruptly of course).

Well, enough ass kissing for one letter. Our best to you and your crew,

Chad & Venessa Cayler

No, no... more ass kissing, please.

Robert Kirkman.

Great comic, I've been reading since issue five, (Ordered issues 1-12 over amazon, each in Volumes, also currently ordered Vol.3 which goes from 13-18), and I say, so far it's pretty good, including the fact it's more than a mindless gun and run comic. But overall it's wonderful and keep it up, (Please don't kill Glenn :(for some reason he's Da bomb!).

I didn't kill him THIS issue? Is that enough?

Anyways the reason I'm actually contacting you is the fact how infection spreaded without bites or scratches on Chris and Julie also Hershel's two daughters and Shane. I Managed to buy issues 15-16 (Couldn't wait for the damn Vol.3) and well a bit surprised at how the five died. I mean the so-called virus couldn't be airborne? So it has to be water borne, meaning some stupid zombie fell into a lake or major water reserve and contaminated it. Also animals, animals drinking the water itself must have

spreaded the infection when humans (Such as Shane) hunted and ate the animals (Deers, rabbits, etc.). I Mean it dose seem logical besides one part, what prevents infection from happening? Why after death? I'm stumped on that part so far, but yet I could be wrong?

Man, this must be crackpot month.

Anyways, good luck on the series and rock on man.

P.S. If you can, add a bit more humor tho, I mean sometimes the comic feels a bit morbid with death hapening twenty-four seven.

-Michael Slate

I'll see about making things a bit more funny. The letters columns are funny sometimes right? Sometimes?

Hey Robert,

At first I wanted to jump on the "I never wrote a letter to..."-train, but then I wrote a letter to Pigtales Ovi so that I would be a "letter to the editor veteran"

writing to you. But hey let's talk about the book, I'm hooked up since #1 smiled at my in my favorite comic shop...I wasn't that long into comics by then and still had to find the right thing for me, since I'm not that much in to superheroes...and there was TWD, what a title sounded similar to half the movies of my dvd collection, so I bought it and that brought me here.

I finally found out yesterday what makes your book so special to me, that's why I write this letter...it's the same thing that made me fall in love with Joss Whedon's Buffy series. All the seasons deal with characters and how they live with their problems and each other, and as a gimmick there's a monster every episode and a bigger one at the end of the season, and that's how your book is to me. A great story about several people in a miserable situation dealing with their life... plus zombies. I totally love your characters and how unpredictable they sometimes are!!

There is something about the letters you get I do not understand, why do people keep asking if we will learn more about this/that, and if we see more of Morgan and Duane? To me it's not knowing what happens next issue what makes me walk much faster home if I got a new TWD copy at the shop. Why would anybody know what happens before the new issue is published? But maybe that's just my problem.

Some people are weird... you read this letters column right?

So no questions from me this time.

Keep up the good work (charlie, cliff and tony too of course) that is done to craft one of my favorite books on the market.

Cheers Tilmo
Germany, Aachen

Thanks for the letter... um... Cheers.

Rob,

I had to wait a few extra weeks before I got my copy of Walking Dead #16 (my local comic shop, which I've since given up on, never got copies in and I just said, "what's up with that?"). It was worth the wait, and then some. I've written before, even been published before, so I don't even care about that (though it is a natural feather in my cap). I just needed to write and say while I love this series, and every issue gets better and better, that when Rick opened the door to the cell I had goosebumps. That is, in my ever so humble opinion, the greatest moment I've ever read in comic book history!

Thank you for that.
Mike Coughlin

Thanks.

Letter Hacks,

Woweeeee.
I just don't know where to begin with this letter. There is so much going on in your book right now! I was finally able to pick up the last two issues. The girly side of me wanted to crawl up in a corner and cry at the end of 16 but I was brought back to my senses at the very end of 17. Let's just say that I'm looking forward to Rick's promise of beating the murderer to death. And from the looks of the cover for 18- justice is definitely being served. At least I hope it's Thomas he's beating all to hell.

Speaking of the covers... Tony's work is more and more amazing every time a new issue comes out. I couldn't stop looking at 17's cover. There is so much detail to take in there. He's incredible with the coloring. Which is just enough. The rest of the book doesn't need it. The tones are perfect. If anything color would only take away from the true grit of this story. I'm glad you refuse to publish this in color, Robert.

I've never been so impressed with Charlie's work as I was in 17. He's really nailed it. The expressions, the action... each character has their own face. I just can't get enough of it. I take back any negative thing I've ever said about him. Charlie, if I could find my shoes I'd

eat
them both and smile while
doing so.

Cliff, your gray tones are as gorgeous as ever.

The fangirl in me is screaming and jumping for joy that Tyreese isn't dead. Scared me there for a minute! Lori is still pissing me off. Good job with that. I hope I wasn't that bitchy while I was pregnant. Carol kissing Lori really surprised me. Something tells me we haven't seen the end of that little moment. You better prepare yourself for some hate mail if Lori does anything to jeopardize Rick's dwindling sanity, Robert.

Who am I kidding? I'm no good at hate mail. ;)

Okay, I'm going to quit rambling on but I do want to ask one question. Where is Patricia? We didn't see any more of her after her little talk with Thomas. Man, I hope Andrea is okay!

Well, until tomorrow! You'll undoubtedly be receiving another email from me after reading 18.

Jenn Lee

By now you know exactly where Patricia is.

Hey there,
First off AWESOME BOOK GUYS. This is my first year reading comics. I always thought they sucked. But a friend of mine knows I am a huge zombie fan and told me about your books. So I bought the first TPB and read it. Then the next day got on Ebay and Bought Issues 1-8 and from then on I bought it every month. I just got issue 17 and I saw in the back you talking about posters. I WOULD BUY EVERY SINTGLE ONE YOU PRINTED! Lol. Do it! POSTERS POSTER POSTERS!!!

Mail me a check and we'll talk. I am looking into posters, though... I'll keep you all, um... posted.

Dear Kirklan...I mean KirkMAN,

Still love the book! No "Atilla The Hun-gry", no "Charlie Manson is President", no "Dangerous Zombies in the last few issues"...

WTF Dude? Did you change your mind and decide and decide to do a comic adaptation of "OZ"? The black prisoners are going to stage an uprising??? Please don't do it, you and I both know real people are a lot more reasonable than that and it just seems cliched. Or is it your way of stroking HBO's ego to get a series out of them?

Maybe I just suck. That's not out of the realm of possibility.

That's it for complaints, but you should really hound those guys for a show! Use HBO's offices in Atlanta; utilize JPM Productions out of Atlanta for shooting and effects; shoot it just out side of Atlanta... It makes sense, trust me! I need a spooky fix from HBO now that "Carnivale" is done.

I wholeheartedly agree.

Now questions:

1) You're not going to make the book LESS talky just because some other fans don't like to read are you? That would suck AND hurt character development.

No, no... not at all. The book is what it is. There was just some action stuff to get out of the way. So it got a little less talking for a few issues. It should be back to its balloon filled majesty soon enough.

2) What conventions are you hitting this summer? If any of us track you down and pull a Marc Silvestri (ask him how he got into the biz) is that cool??

I know all about how Marc got in the biz and I think it's best if I dash your hopes now by saying I'm married... AND I'm not really into that. I'll be at San Diego and Baltimore for sure, and I'll probably hit Chicago also... but I'm not sure just yet (95% sure I'll be there).

3) How much longer are we going to have to sit in this boring assed prison? Get them the fuck on the road!!! You can't very well replenish your cast if they all die in prison, now can you?

Stick with it... you'll like what's coming. Sheesh... have a LITTLE faith.

4) Why don't you EVER pay homage to other horror classics? Name someone Barbara, or use the "kicks much ass for the lord" line in the book instead of the letters column.

I think some times that stuff distracts from the story. I did name that kid in the first issue Duane Jones. I'm sure you'll see a Barbara before too long.

5) Have you joined the Zombie Hunting Society yet? We know you want to!

Nope... I'm just too stinkin' busy!

Michael Riedlinger
ZS Reservist

Kirkman,

First off, I'm going to have to agree with some previous letters and say I definitely want a poster from this series. Any of the covers would be great, and issue 17 was one of my favorites. Also I'm glad to see that TWD is on a slightly less chaotic schedule. If anyone else gets tired of waiting for the next Walking Dead comic to come out, I did find the perfect solution...buy Invincible! Anyway, I was happy to see Thomas' face pounded into mush last issue. It's bad enough that they have to deal with the zombies. If only Rick had remembered that there really are no black serial killers, its always the creepy looking white guy. Hopefully they don't throw him to the zombies though, you'd hate to give them more of a reason to hang around the prison. I'm thinking that in trying to get the riot gear, they're going to set a bunch of prisoner-zombies free.

Man... I just can't fool you guys these days can I? I'm going to have to try harder for the next few issues. You guys are really keeping me on my toes these days.

Well, thanks for the excellent stories and be sure to print my letter since it'll be a good Invincible plug. There's no reason we all shouldn't be reading both comics (alright, I'll stop sucking up).

Andy Robak

Consider your letter printed Andy. And thanks for the Invincible plug. It's hard to cross-promote the two because they're such vastly different books, but if any of you out there like superhero comics, and since you're already reading a comic I'm sure there's a good chance some of you do, give Invincible a shot. If you don't like it... hey, you're only out three dollars.

Letter Hacks,

Better by the issue, an understatement, but pretty

true. I thought things were getting pretty heated with Hershel's kids getting offed & revisiting Shane, but the way Rick pummeled the hell out of Thomas was amazing! Charlie & Cliff did wonders with that double page spread, beautiful. Glad to see Glenn and the boys getting pretty creative with things, and Carl & Sophia going out; hope they don't fall into it too early...17 issue in and a hell of a ride so far.

1) How many different ways can you kill a zombie?

73

2) If you had to kill a zombie, how would you do it?

Magnets.

3) If the world was overrun with zombies, would you still write comic books?

Probably not. In fact, I can't think of a better reason to quit.

4) Do zombies even like comic books?

Do actors like the movies they're in?

5) Are their any zombie dogs and cats around? Can Carl have one?

No, there will be no zombie animals in this book.

6) What's the strangest zombie thing you know of?

Zombie toothpaste. Google it.

7) When can we expect zombie Kirkman, Moore, Adlard & Rathburn to show up?

That's already happened. You must have missed it.

-Mike Storniolo

Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead #17, and have been with you since #1, so I guess all of the praise and acclaim for the writing, art and book in general can be taken as read. This is, undisputably, my favorite book on the market. There.

I basically decided to write because of a couple of comments you made in your letters page in #17 that I wanted to respond to.

First you mentioned how lucky horror fans are to be alive now because of the massive number of horror movies being released these days. I completely agree with that (even though many of them are crap, that is the lot of horror fans to sift through the crap for the rare and precious bits of gold) except for the fact that it isn't really luck. It's politics. Or maybe sociology is a better word. In times of great political/social strife, there is always a rise in the number of horror movies on display. For example: The beginnings of the Great Depression, gave us the Universal Horrors, Dracula, Frankenstein, etc. Post WWII we got a lot of radiation-nuclear monsters overrunning the earth type of movies and space age sci-fi horrors. In the 60s and 70s we had the racial tensions of the civil rights movement as well as Viet Nam, (protests, social anxiety and family unit melt-downs galore) which brought about such classics as Night Of The Living Dead, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre and many others. Of course the Cold War/Reagan/Nuclear Paranoia years was the era of dime-a-dozen slasher movies, most greatly exemplified by the Friday the 13th and Nightmare on Elm Street franchises. (For fear of getting too political it is prudent to point out that in the prosperous and reasonably peaceful Clinton years there were almost no new horror movies to be found.) So now, I believe we owe our current crop of sometimes brilliant horror to the tragedy of 9/11, the new war in the Middle East and our failing economy. (Is it an accident that Amityville, a film with a great deal of subtext dealing with the financial burdens of a young family just making their start, has been remade and released just as tensions about the war are beginning to wane and people are starting to worry about gas prices in excess of \$2.00 a gallon?) I think this would be a great thesis, that somebody should write an article, or maybe a book on. Not me though. I prefer to stick to fiction.

This all makes sense.

Which brings me to the other thing I wanted to say. (Sorry, this letter is getting a lot longer than I intended.) You also mentioned in the letters page that you would kill off Rick if a situation ever presented itself where you thought it would be interesting to do so, without doing damage to the greater story as it is meant to progress. Well, way back in your first story arc, there was a moment where I knew, if I was writing this book, Rick would have died. I think it was pretty good and I think you might find it an interesting alternate path for the book. It's nothing you can use, obviously, but you might find it interesting. Rick never would have made it out of Atlanta. He would have met Glenn there, and Glenn would have tried to rescue him, but just when you thought they were going to make it, Rick would have been killed. How, doesn't matter. We would then follow the surviving but possibly somewhat traumatised Glenn back to camp where the issue would end as we see him greeted by Shane, Lori and Carl, who we would recognize from Rick's flash-backs. Heartbreaking, no? The story would have then continued more or less as it has, but with Shane replacing Rick as our hero. This would have left readers with the absolute certainty that ANYONE could die, from the very beginning. Also, it would have left us at the end of the issue with a set of familiar leads which we would recognize from the first issue, who could carry the story forward without having to develop brand new leads to replace the one we lost. That would have been pretty cool, no? And tragic. Probably stronger than the happy family reunion ending, which I felt came a little too soon and a little too easily. But that's just my opinion, and I feel you've far more than made up for that one tiny misstep.

Misstep? Bah, I liked that scene. I think you've got a good

idea here, and it would have been cool, but the book needed an anchor for readers to latch on to. Killing off our focus that early could have alienated people. Plus, you'd miss all the cool things Rick's done sense. I did think about killing Rick in issue six instead of Shane, but again... decided against it. He'll die when I'm ready just like all the rest. You'll love it.

Anyway, you also said in that page that you'd like some more challenging letters to keep things fresh. Hopefully, this was one.

Keep them coming,
--Corby Daniel

PS: It freaked me out when you had those two little girls decapitated!! That took some fucking balls. I'm so glad I read this book!!

I got balls bigger'n Texas, baby!! You can see them from space. Just wait until next issue.

Zombiologists,

This one was dark from the get go. Even with the sex in the gym, the innocent kiss, and Dale's half-hearted attempts at reducing the numbers of the zombie horde (especially the mashed-into-the-fence bit...), the issue was just weighted down with pending menace. Maybe it's just the growing darkness of their reality. I'm not sure, but I do know I realized this issue was pivotal before I read your intro to the letters page.

Robert Kirkman, pointing out the obvious since 1978.

Also seems to me they may end up hanging the wrong man, at least for the murder of Hershel's girls. His dialogue was all wrong, not to mention the implement he chose for his assault would have been useless in removing a head. No, I think the girls died at the hands of someone much closer to them. MUCH closer.

Since when can you not cut a head off with a knife? A big, sharp, knife? True, it'd take a lot of cuts, but it could be done.

Of course I could be way off...

You just might be.

Somehow I missed the Lord of the Flies parallels, but,

now that I see them, I'm eager to see what you do with them. For all intents and purposes, they might as well be stranded on an island.

I'm losing my appreciation of the prison as a homestead. Maybe because its' symbolic weight is becoming a large part of the overall darkness of the work. Now that they are prisoners, seems they're likely to become emotional zombies themselves, feeding off of the building tensions that are inevitable in such stark, limited confines.

Stick with it. The prison is cool.

Can't say I shared your fondness for the art. For the first time I noticed Cliff's wonderful use of gray scaling far more than Charlie's art. The art was fine, it just felt off to me. Sorry, even as an artist I can't quite put my finger on what about it didn't work for me. Maybe it was that Charlie's anatomy seemed off more than usual. Sorry, can't figure it out.

To each is own, I suppose.

Looking forward to 18.

Thanks, guys, for a continually moving experience.

Later,
Chip

P.S. Could I suggest a roster with thumbnail portraits at the beginning or ending of each issue. I suck at names, and all I can remember is Rick and Lori's names. I have to hunt through the issues if characters aren't named in each issue.

Already done. How's that for service? It won't be in EVERY issue, but it'll be in most.

Greetings
yet again Deadheads(wait, that name's
already taken innit?)

Sadly, yes.

Anyway, issue 17. Pretty good stuff gentlemen. Loved the scene with Carl and Sophia. Oh and Rick beating the shit out of Thomas wasn't half bad either. Was that a tooth stuck in his hand? Nice.

That was a tooth, yes siree.

Oh, by the way, Sea of Red was pretty friggin cool. The art was very different than most the stuff out there and the story was pretty intriguing (though it kinda bugged me that Marco turned just from being bitten. But that's just nitpicking.) So thanks for the recommendation. I'll keep checkin' it out.

I'm trying to keep the back covers of this book as ads for books I highly recommend from Image. So if you see it on the back cover, I think it's going to be great. I pick each back cover with care... so don't think I'll advertise any old book back there.

One last thing. The poster is a fuckin SPLENDID idea. Make it. NOW DAMMIT!!!! And action figures too! With friggin kung-fu grip! Kung-fu grip and realistic head exploding action! Yeah, that's it. I'm so fucking brilliant.

I'll look into the action figures.

Well, I've rambled enough. Keep on doing that thing you do. And get to work on the action figures. Millions are at stake!

-Mike Capuano

I'm into millions... so don't worry, I'll check into it.

Mr. Kirkman (and co.),

I have to say that after finishing issue 17, I am just awe-struck. You have created such a vast, complex and detailed world in such a relatively short time. I cannot remember the last time anything besides a beautiful woman held my attention this long.

Dude... we're up there with BEAUTIFUL WOMEN?! We must be doing something right.

Keep up the fantastic work!! As far as the people that seem to be getting ready to bitch about the release schedule for these books, tell them to fuck off. The Walking Dead is like a fine meal. I've never walked into a 5 star restaurant and kicked in the kitchen door to make the chef hurry up my with my filet mignon, so why the hell would I ask you to rush one damn bit past the pace that best allows you to tell this amazing story?

One completely hooked fan,
Mike Conners

Well, as far as the schedule goes we've hit another snag with Charlie having his second child (congrats mister Adlard). We're skipping the month of August in solicitations so we can keep up. We're a month behind so the book will still ship in August, but we'll be on time after that. I'm not going to play the "you can't rush greatness" card. I want this book to be dead-on monthly more than anyone, trust me. Thanks for the support, though.

HOLY SHIT, MAN!!!

Rick is going off the deep end real damn quick! When he went out to re-kill (I guess that works) Shane, I thought it was a little bit nutty. In issue 17, I've come to realize that he's just bugfuck insane! He beat the tar outta that guy, then he says that he wants to hang him for all to see what happens to people who break the law in this New World Order that he's concocted in his mind over the last five or six months? He's turning into some kind of whacked-out, Hitler-esque wannabe dictator of the remnants of the human race. And he was such a nice guy at first, too...

This book is messed up. This is one of the most human stories I have ever read. I started to pick it up because it was the first comic I'd ever seen on the shelf that was about zombies, and the crazy thing about it is that I almost don't give a rat's ass that there are zombies in it anymore! It ranks right up there with Ennis' Preacher, that one guy who's name I can't remember for some reason's Midnight Nation, and White Wolf Game Studio's Demon: The Fallen Trilogy, by

Greg Stoltz,
who must have sold his soul for deep
inside knowledge of all things demonic. TWD is now my #1
favorite.

Not just because of the story, either. You bitch about having so many letters in Letter Hacks sometimes, but there are a lot of books and movies out there I never would have heard of if some of those letters hadn't been printed. I picked up and read Reign of the Dead and RotD: Apocalypse End, both of which are great, solely because people mentioned them in their letters. Admittedly, I was a little disappointed with the OVERLY MASSIVE amount of plugging that you did in #17, but I'm sure I'll be picking up a few of the non-Marvel titles you mentioned (sorry, I do love your writing, but I haven't read Marvel ever since that Maximum Clonage crap. It really killed them for me.)

Oh, come on... one minute you're telling me how great the letters column is for recommended reads and then you're complaining about me plugging some books? I'm telling you--there's a lot of good books out there. Give 'em a shot.

Anyway, like so many of your other readers, I have questions/ideas that will probably only get answered in round-about ways/not be used because they're not yours;

1) Kill Rick already. He deserves it. One of these nights, Lori should just feel pity for her husband because he's gone completely insane and blow his brains out in his sleep. Be nice about it, he still deserves a good, clean, quick, honorable death, not something horrific.

Man, you guys turn on people QUICK.

2) Is Tyreese hiding some plan of vengeance somewhere deep behind those eyes of his? I mean, he saw his daughter die, come back as a zombie, get re-killed by Rick, strangled Chris, waited until he came back so he could re-kill him, and plunged himself into a room full of zombies with nothing but a hammer, and lived through it all. Now he's all cheery and happy-go lucky (YATTA!), almost like he hasn't a care in the world.

Either he's gonna snap and kill Rick himself for some reason (it's always the quiet ones), or he's one tough, hard-core son-of-a-bitch. If I was one of the survivors, and he became our leader, right now I'd shit solid gold if he told me to.

Tyreese is mighty awesome. I'll just leave it at that.

3) I haven't heard hardly any mention of God or a higher power from any of the characters mouths, unless it was followed by dammit. Did any of them have any kind of religious beliefs before this zombie thing went down, and if so, how do they feel about it now? On the topic of religion, are there any crazy religious zealots out there, stockpiling armaments and destroying zombies by themselves or with groups? Or at the very least some bad-ass group of militant altar boys or something? Or preachers that believe this is God's will, and are trying to spread the word that mankind deserves a zombie plague for their sins (scratch that, enough people said you took the prison idea from Reign of the Dead, that would be too much)? Or groups of kids living all Lord of the Flies style?

Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on. As for the other stuff... just keep reading.

4)Hasn't anyone else from the area near the prison thought about holing up there? It would seem like a good idea to me in that situation.

We'll be seeing more of the area around the prison later on in the series. All will be explained.

5) Is anyone with the proper medical know how and equipment even out there trying to find an answer to the zombie problem, cures, vaccines and the like? Boy, after all Hershel's been through, finding out it WAS a good idea to keep them zombies would break him, if he hasn't broken already...

There may be someone out there... but who knows if we'll ever see them.

6) If I was safely holed up in a prison or someplace during a zombie menace, and one of my friends/family members got killed and came back, I'd lock them down somewhere so I could see how long it took them to

decompose.

I figure it would help to know that, as by the time they decompose more than likely all the previous zombies would be gone, too. That, and I must admit I'd feel a sense of satisfaction at the ability to occasionally point and laugh at a few of my friends if they did something stupid and got themselves zombified. This doesn't seem to have crossed any of the characters' minds, though.

I think you are a heartless bastard.

7) Now I'll suggest a few things to all the readers who helped me find cool stuff. I highly recommend that everyone who reads this buys HBO's Carnivale Season 1 on dvd, and records all of the 2nd season episodes that are still On-Demand. Maybe if HBO gets even more money, there will be a TWD series on HBO one day. Also, pick up DC's Blood of the Demon. It's written by Will Pfeifer, from my home town. I think he even used to play live-action Vampire the Masquerade in the same group I did.

I've met Will, he's a good guy. I only watched one episode of Carnivale and it wasn't bad but I just never sought it out. I find that if you watch two episodes of an HBO show you're hooked for life... and there's only so many hours in the day.

Okay, thanks for listening! I'm very happy to hear that you already have plans for issue 25. That means I'll still get to read at least 8 more issues, hopefully plenty more! Can't wait to see Morgan and Duane again, and the aliens in #75 (okay, I do hope the alien thing is a joke, and not something you're serious about but making seem like a joke so as to throw us off when it actually happens).

Man, I've got plans for this book well past 50. As long as numbers hold this book will be around for a good long time. And yeah... the alien thing is a complete joke.

When the zombies arise, here's to the comic geeks taking over the world!
(chug, slam)
Dan Haskell
Rockford, IL

P.S. Obviously you've seen Yatta. Any idea what the hell G-R-double E-N-L is? GREENL?

It's PEOPLE! PEEEEOPLE!!!!

Dear, Mr. Kirkman

Before get into this, know that I love your comic. It is in contest for my favorite comic I've ever read. I met you at the Seattle Comic-Con a month or two ago. I was the dude in the Phantasm shirt, you might remember me, might not. Here we go.

I don't remember what I had for dinner last night. There's only room for comics up in this head of mine.

A few people in internet land have said that this book has racist-undertones. Saying that you are using it as a metaphor for people not listening to holocaust deniers. It has also been said that this book is very popular in white power circles. I googled the hell out of the last one, and can't find any evidence on it mind you.

Yeah, look... there's no racist-undertones in this book. The coolest guy in the book is black... or Asian depending on who you ask. It's women I hate. (That's a joke...damn it.)

I'm going to play devil's advocate for a second here. Issue 13's cover is perfect. You get to see Rick, the hero, blue eyes, blonde hair. (Rick has brown hair) A man trying to protect "his way of living", no matter what number of inhuman beings he has to exterminate. The zombies, a possible metaphor for how the Nazi's viewed the Jews? Inhuman, greed/driven for a single goal, no respect for life, etc. The Nazi's let themselves believe that the Jews, were in fact subhuman thus treating them like monsters. Some might say that that is what TWD is all about. (and they would be crazy.) Showing, and saying that it is ok to exterminate an entire race, as long as they are not human to you. Rumors saying that Tony Moore left the book because of this. (Are you kidding? Tony is the most racist cat I know. He's racilicious!) Racial views have not always been left out in the zombie culture obviously. Bela Lugosi, in White Zombie, using black Haitian zombies in his plantation. For instance, in the first

issue, you introduced the black father, Morgan, and black son. They have a bad car, live in a bad neighborhood. Of course Rick lets them stay, but it seems they are only welcome in the white neighborhood as long as they improve it for its owners and don't entertain any thoughts of settling there permanently. (This is insane) Sterotypes are fun too. The only two people of color in the prison, murderer, and crack head. (It was a prison for Christ's sake. Would you rather they were in for rape and poor dancing? The white guy was a serial killer!) Oh, and yah they're involved sexually. (See, that's not a stereotype! Right?) Tyreese was a tough football player. (should it have been hockey?)

I find myself not on board with some of these observations, as there are facts to point out their flaws. (I wish you had mentioned these facts. Send another letter.) To me, the villains are not only the zombies, but often ourselves. I personally view this book as survival story, with some undertone of good social commentary. If anything else just see it as one dude who is writing a good zombie story, one for the ages in fact. BUT, I just wanted to bring it to your attention and see if any of it holds weight with you? So Mr. Kirkman...do you put nationalistic, or racist undertones into this fine comic?

No. Not even close. Jesus.

PS...Posters are a must. Cloth patches with TWD logo (if you don't I will screen print em first!).

I'll look into it. If there is to be TWD merchandise... you'll hear it here first.

Back to the race thing for a minute... Tyreese was a used car salesman after a short football career. Morgan lived in a bad neighborhood... but hey I lived in a bad neighborhood at the time... and I'm white. The thing is, anyone could read anything into the context of this book if they tried hard enough. It just doesn't make it so.

Dear Robert and Charlie

I'm quite sure most readers will focus on the emotional fireworks in this the latest issue of The Walking Dead. BUT what impresses me the most, is the shrewd fashion in which you set up future storylines. Since Rick's group prison stay started, more and more "Roamers" have trickled their way to the prison's gates. Just now our survivors have discovered the fruits of their neglect. Of course they have had more immediate concerns. You add that to Dexter's statement about the hidden stash of weaponry and its obvious that the gates will give and that WAR is coming.

Rick's new unwritten law is kind of obvious in these savage new times. But I wonder what it'll do to little Carl's head. Dexter's evaluation of the group's sanity is not too far from the truth. Living between doom and gloom is sure to traumatize anyone.

Now that everyone has mentioned each and every zombie flick ever, it's up to me to invite a little controversy by bringing up a short film that had some of the most terrifying dead walkers ever. Even if at the end they turned out to be only dancing ghouls. Yes, I'm talking about that alleged child molester's video Thriller. You may or may not like Michael Jackson's music. But John Landis, director of American Werewolf in London did a great job and Rick Baker's make up was wonderful and ghastly.

I haven't seen that video in forever... I'll have to look that up.

Love Charlie's work. Page 2 panel 1 had a great but quiet emotional intensity. Once again keep Adlard chained to his drawing table and the regular title in b&w, but I'm rooting for a TWD annual in full color featuring Tony Moore in a one-off return.

As promised I bought the first two Invincible trades. I'll read them soon. I have a good feeling I'll like it too. TWD has become my favorite title by far. Still can't believe you are this good at only 26.

Bah, I'm really 47. I mean... do I LOOK 26?

Your loyal reader
Victor Rosario Fermaint

What happens when Invincible clashes with The Walking

Dead? You
will find out soon via snail mail.

Ooh! I can't wait!

Howdy, Mr. Kirkman,

Not being a fan of all things zombies, your comic flew under my radar. After reading great things about you, I gave your superhero comics a try. Not bad, I thought. Still I passed on your 'zombie' book. That is, until an uneventful 'fifth week event' caused me to skip most comics coming out in December.

With a few extra dollars in my pocket, I figured I'd give your zombie book a try. GREAT READING!!! After two TPB's and a handfull of issues, you've made me a zombie fan.

Jeff Ghearing

PS: I still think most zombie movies are crap. Prove me wrong!!! Patiently waiting for the Walking Dead movie.

You have obviously not seen the Romero flicks. Welcome aboard, though. It's good to have you.

Dear Robert Kirkman,
I just finished issue #17, and man was it ever intense! This is by far my favorite comic series, and each issue makes me love it even more. What I really love about what you and the art team are doing with The Walking Dead is show how these people are adjusting to this world they are forced to live in. There are no entirely good or bad guys (well, maybe Thomas), just people who are trying the best they can, but will end up making mistakes. You could have easily made Rick a perfect character that

was always solving the group's problems. Instead you are forming a real character who has definitely let his position get to him. I can't wait to see where he is in issue 75 (hopefully equipped with some anti-alien weaponry.) That is of course assuming that he lives that long...

Charlie Adlard,
You definitely knew what you were doing this issue. Rick's attack was awesome, you really made me feel his rage. That two-page spread was just too sweet as well.

Cliff Rathburn,
Mighty fine work on the grey tones again. I particularly loved how you "colored" that last page.

Tony Moore,
This may just be my new favorite Walking Dead cover, simply brilliant. I hope you can stay on as cover artist for the long haul.

Keep up the great work,
Isaac Milton

Thanks for the kind words all around.

Just read Issue 17. Have to say making posters is a fantastic idea. I'd buy one as long as it wasn't extremely gaudy which seems unlikely with The Walking Dead but I'll throw it out there as a caveat anyway. I'm trying to think of other merch I'd like to see... only two things I can think of would be either a sticker or static cling of some kind (Which would work in your benefit when everyone driving behind me on saw "The Walking Dead" looking back at them) or some kind of patch or something because it seems to be all the rage to pin and sew patches to book bags now a days. (Unless your school doesn't allow you to use knapsacks anymore, which is becoming more the case these days than it ought to be.)

Y'know... I think I may just look into that.

I actually picked up Sea of Red the same week Issue 17 and I read it before I read The Walking Dead (I subscribe to the save the best for last theory... and at the time Sea of Red was an unknown so I read it first.) so imagine my surprise when you mentioned it and how good it was in the letter hacks. I picked it up solely based on the artwork and how unusual it is. I mean as good as Jim Lee and the Kubert brothers are when every book looks exactly the fucking same I'll give anything or anyone with the balls to try something different a chance. The "gimmick" of a sort of red tinted sephia tone look aside, it turned out to be one hell of a book. I must see where this tale of vampire pirates will take me.

See, guys... I only recommend the best. Sea of Red is a great book... and if you like that... check out Strange Girl, coming in June.

I'm going to have to disagree with you on Runaways Vol. 2 being the perfect jump on point. When it came out I talked to my comic book guy and told him my reservations about

jumping
onto any book midway through and he assured me "Buy this book. If you don't like it I'll buy it back." which gave me that warm and fuzzy feeling. I told myself "If someone loves a book that much it has got to be at least half way decent." and I trusted this guy because after all he was doing the same with the TPB of The Walking Dead the second they hit shelves. So I read Runaways #1 vol 2 and I thought it was crap. I was totally going to take him up on his offer, but for the \$3 it's not worth it to ask him to buy it back even if I did feel vile for having read it. But after a week or so some voice in the back of my head said to give it another chance, so I found and read Runaways vol1 and thought it was the shit. I still think vol2 issue 1 is weak though. Especially when you compare it to any issue of vol 1. (though in reality Vol 1 did amp it up each and ever issue, so if issue 1 is the worst he has to offer we are goin to be in for a nice ride.)

Ah, you came around in the end. Runaways is great. I stand by my recommendation of volume 2 though. I love my BKV.

My favorite of the Vaughan books (Y the Last Man, Runaways, Ex Machina) is definitely Ex Machina. Something about the way he manages to weave the

political debate in a "super hero" book is remarkable. His

debates always seem to logically thought out you have to wonder if Vaughan isn't a god damn Vulcan because I can't help but think if he were an actual politician the world would be a much better place. Plus even if Ex Machina begins to suck a big one nothing, absolutley nothing will compare to the way I felt when I got turned that page and saw the last page of issue #1. I got teary eyed and no comic book has ever done that... ever. (Sorry dude zombies freak me out good and plenty but they don't make me teary eyed... paranoid sure, but never teary eyed.)

Ex Machina is a damn fine book.

And now on a completely unrelated topic, I find I'm most productive when I have certain key pieces of music playing so I'm wondering, do you listen to music when you write? If you do, do you have any particular favorites? I being a music director at my college's radio station I'm always trying to find out what people's music taste is so I can recommend other good music to them they might like, because in a way that is sort of my job.

I do listen to music while I write but it becomes background noise after a while. I listen to all kinds of music but my favorites right now would be Nick Cave, Neil Young, David Bowie... stuff like that.

-Jesse Mrozowski

I've never read Battle Pope, never been able to find it anywhere for sale, but does it feel a little odd now with the pope having just died?

Hey, I didn't kill the guy. June 2005 is the fifth anniversary of Battle Pope so that release has been planned for a while. June also marks my fifth year in the industry.

HOLY SPIT!!!!

The Walking Dead is NOT about zombies! Sure, sure it took me 17 issues to catch on but I am on board now! Funny I could have sworn that this book was about zombies... I had been wondering how you would extend the life of the comic past twenty or so issues, especially given the rate of death of the living characters, and the fact that living gets attacked by un-dead - repercussions ensue - can only be done in a limited number of ways.... But the zombies are only a secondary horde of characters... The really story is how a small group of the living will re-establish 'civil' society! FOR THE LOVE OF TOAST THAT IS BRILLIANT!

Needless to say I LOVE the book... and I now view your possibilities as limitless! What will the RULES be? How do you re-establish social norms in a society now crowded with the walking dead? Can the group avoid the same mistakes that lead the pre-zombie world astray? [These are rhetorical by the way]
Hell Kirkman, I liked the book before, I am completely hooked now! Good show!
I cannot end the letter without a tip of the hat to the art team... from the pure rage of Tony's cover to the intensity of Charlie and Cliff's interior. I simply cannot remember the last time human emotion was rendered with such passion. In a word thank you to the whole team!

-Jason Mazaik

[p.s. this is my first letter to a comic and some such non-sense if that aids my chances in being printed]

You are so totally full of shit. This isn't your first letter and I'm NOT going to print it... oh never mind. Sure... I'll print it.

Dearest Mr. "YOU KILL YOU DIE",

YOU KILL, YOU DIE! Or so I hear. Laying on the foreshadowing a bit thick, aren't we? I guess that's a staple of any zombie medium though. Why do I get the feeling Tyreese is going to be the victim of this mantra? Always gotta be the black guy, huh?!

Other than that, I'm lovin' it (to quote the worst ad campaign ever). One more method of feeding my zombie desires. I hope the series keeps up for quite a while. Though I believe your idea of zombie ***** ***** ***** has been taken already, by that new movie "Undead." Better luck next time.

- Andy "You kill, you die" H.

I edited your letter to delete some spoilers for the move "UNDEAD" I think it's a great flick and I'd hate to ruin any surprises for anyone out there.

Yo Hacks,

Everyone has been asking me about my opinion on "The Walking Dead" published from Image. Since Arrow produced one of comicdoms first on going zombie-Romero-esque style comics on the market back in 1986.

I had read a few of the later titles that appeared like "Zombie World", "Night of the Living Dead: London", and later editions of "Dead World" published by Caliber Comics. While all of these were interesting, none of them compelled me to want to grab the next issue to see what happens.

I had tried twice to relaunch my own version of a zombie holocaust comic called "The Dead", both times the books had great reviews, however both suffered the loss of thier artists within three issues. Not being able to find the right replacements with a style geared towards the genre, caused the cancellation both times with numbers climbing. Frustrating to no end...sigh...

Anyway, people I knew kept asking, "so whadda ya think of the new Walking Dead comic?". So I decided it go out and give it a try. Anyone who knows me, knows I'm a huge zombie fan and has seen about every film made from "The Invisable Invaders" (cool & underrated), all the Dead and Living Dead films even the italian flicks, seen 'em all.

So it was off to the local comic shop. Ebay proved the early editions were both hard to get and expensive. My local shop owner was out of the first trade, but I picked up the second one and all the remaining issues.

Well, I've just finished everything up to issue 16 and here's my thoughts. This is one of the best books on the market today. I can see what the strong appeal is. First I'll tackle the art of the series: Both Tony Moore and current artist Charlie Adlard are good, not jaw dropping great, but they are suitable for the book. Sometimes the characters seemed a little stiff (okay for zombies, I suppose...lol). Often backgrounds were left lacking a little. The use of grey tones was nice as was the use of shadow and lighting. I'd read about the penciling change and I feel it hardly missed a beat. Only after reading in the letters page about readers comparing the pros and cons of each did I really noticed. I hope that's a good thing. Overall my grade on the art is a C+ or B-.

Now for the writing/plot : Not much to complain about here. The characters have depth and are well rounded and motivated. Many soap opera methods of pacing are used though out the book making it a quick and enteresting read. Believe me keeping a band together, feeling safe and goal focused is a real challenge in this type of book. And Kirkman hits his mark. If I could lodge a complaint, it's just not enough gore and zombie action. We all love our characters but we love our blood and guts too. My overall grade here is a B+ or A-

This is a good comic! Glad I bought it, one of the best on the market today, and I'll be buying issue 17. Also big bonuses for an awesome letters page, and for keeping a fairly regular schedule.

While there will always be comparisons in comics. I'm glad people enjoyed our "Dead World" series and hope the new one lives up to expectations. Meanwhile,

I look forward to publishing a new "The Dead" series near the end of the year. I can only hope my book will be greeted with as much anticipation.

Keep up the good work.
Ralph Griffith

Thanks for all the kind words and critiques, Ralph. I'll be sure to check out "The Dead" when it comes out. Please write back and let us all know when you've got a firm date set.

Okay, boys... that's it for the letters column this month. I hope you enjoyed it. I'll see you all back here next month, right? RIGHT?!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Thanks go out to all you deads and deadettes for picking up our twentieth issue! The big two-oh! Ah, twenty, too young to be in love... too old not to be. It's good to officially make it into the big numbers on this book. Hope you people are enjoying the story so far, it shows no signs of ending just yet.

Our first order of business is to welcome aboard a new member to our creative team. As of this issue, Rus Wooton has come on board as our new letterer! That's right, kids, I'll no longer be personally throwing the word balloons on the page and pointing the tails at the person who's talking... that'll be all up to Rus. He's been lettering Invincible for about TEN issues now, so no worries, we're in good hands. I mean it when I say that aside from Chris Eliopoulos and John Workman, Rus is the ONLY guy I'd trust to letter the book. He's a real pro so I hope you'll all give him a warm welcome.

And now for something completely different.

Last issue in a preposterous letter that implied that this book has racist undertones I jokingly said that Tony Moore is a racist. Some would argue that racism is not a joking matter and some would be correct. I was totally in the wrong and I accept full responsibility. So please, stop breaking Tony's windows, Tony Moore is NOT racist. He is however, "racilicious" as I mentioned last issue, but I did some research and as it turns out... that just means he can run really fast.

My bad.

In other news. I don't know how many of you out there also read my superhero comic, INVINCIBLE but I just approved the printing proofs for the Invincible: Ultimate Collection hardcover. So that should be in stores NOW at the same time as this issue. It's a big, thick, book... full of all kinds of goodies, on top of issues 1-13. So it's the PERFECT starting point for anyone who may be interested in how I write things that don't include zombies. Also, it's a steal at \$34.95 and it makes an EXCELLENT gift. So pick it up. If for nothing else, pick it up for the introduction by Brian Michael Bendis.

Speaking of Brian, he had a little fun with me in the letters column of POWERS #11 by printing my phone number. Now, I've gotten a little TOO MANY phone calls from people and it's getting pretty old... so I figure I've got to do SOMETHING to retaliate... so I think I'll print a nice, OLD, photo of Brian from back when we both lived in Cleveland and he used to baby-sit me. Those were the days. I win.



Now, it's an old photo and I had to have my mom scan it (which was a task in and of itself) so it may not print well... but I still

wanted to share.

So, uh... letters... you want some? Here you go!

Dear Bobby Kirkman

I took the advice you gave me in the reply to my last letter to heart. "Get a life!" so simple and yet so profound. It moved me to spend the last month in quiet meditation and here is the insight I gained. If I were destined to get a life it probably would have happened before I became a 35 year-old married man with a basement full of long boxes. So it's back to writing letters to comic books for me. Lets face it like any comic fan I sport a semi every time I see a letter in print.

A "semi" man... you've got problems. Did I REALLY tell you to get a life? That's harsh. Sorry.

I have to admit I've been a little impatient to see the characters of Walking Dead start to build something of a society but I've decided I'm expecting too much too soon. Rick and the others are still dealing with a lot of emotional shit and coming to the prison only made things worse. While they were driving around in the RV just trying to keep from starving they had to keep things bottled up but now that they've found relative safety inside a prison with a serial killer and one pissed off shotgun wielding inmate those emotions will have to surface and be dealt with before they can seriously think about rebuilding their lives.

In this issue they did take a very big step towards societal building, their first execution. Ok they kind of fucked it up and they weren't able to kill Thomas the way they wanted to (have these people ever heard of posting a guard?) But they did come to a consensus that capital punishment was necessary and that Thomas met the conditions for such punishment.

Rick has two main challenges if he's ever going to move this group from day to day survival to building some sort of stable community.

1) He's got to stop the living from killing the living. This may mean sharing power with the inmates, especially now that they're armed.

2) He needs to get his group to believe once again that they will survive.

The belief that one might live in the world of the dead is fast becoming the minority opinion.

I'm going to go and read Walking Dead again. Maybe I'll even pull my trades out and read the series from the start again. Keep up the good work Kirkman and fuck you for killing those little girls.

Ken Lindgren

The little girls weren't real. So no worries there, thankfully.

Mr. Kirkman

Wow...been reading comics since 1990 (Jesus, has it been 15 years already?) and yours is one of the most entertaining. It's not often you find good storylines and interesting characters; and while I love George Romero's work to death, your book beats the unliving crap out of "Toe Tags." Anyways...I just have a quick question or two, if you wouldn't mind answering them.

1. Where the hell is the military? Being in the service myself, I admit to being a little one sided...but they couldn't all have been wiped out. Even if you did put all armed personnel in the city to protect the civilians, you'd still need military bases to provide logistical support (helicopters, air crews, munitions dumps, communication posts, etc.) During a national emergency like 9/11,

military bases close their gates and have security levels that'd make Colonel Klink sit down and cry. I find it difficult to believe

over run...many bases have heavy brick gates or fences, much like your prison...it wouldn't be difficult at all to hold out.

We just haven't gotten to that yet. Sit tight.

2. A previous letter writer mentioned rigor mortis. Unless I'm mistaken, rigor mortis wears away after a day or two as the body decays, which brings me to my last question-

Hey, check that out... a good explanation.

3. Are the bodies decaying at a normal rate? I wouldn't think so, but I do wonder if you have some kind of formula as to how long it takes. If I recall, Dr. Logan in Day of the Dead mentioned something about the decay process taking nearly twelve years before a zombie would become immobile... but I doubt you're using Romero as scripture.

Looking forward to some more great reading

C.S. Muncy

The bodies are NOT decaying at a normal rate. They are decaying but it varies so much from zombie to zombie depending on climate, activity and so on... there's no way to peg down an actual time line. Also, our characters are worried about more important things at the moment.

Rick has to die. There I said it. He seems to cause more trouble than he's worth, especially in issue 17 when he says.

"Listen to me, I'm a cop-I've been trained to make decisions like this. I'm the only one here in a position of authority... That's what you all look up to me for... I'm in charge"

He deserves to die for making such an egotistical statement. The person who says they should be the leader is the one person who should NOT be the leader. Be wary of those who desire power. Like didn't we learn anything from Plato's Republic about what makes a good leader? I guess not.

KILL RICK

Best wishes (on killing off rick)

Wes Monillas

I'll get right on that.

Dear TWD,
Two letters printed! I am officially the envy of my L.C.R. (Local Comic Retailer). I shop at Comic Cave here in Columbus and it was Mike that got me started on your book. Most of the employees there seem to be big fans. I've been reading since #3. I collect both the monthlies and the TPBs.

Unfortunately I got #18 before #17. I know shipping can be a problem in the industry (I've given up on Ultimates), but I'm patient enough if the work is worth it. In your case it is. I knew Andrea wouldn't get killed (her and Dale just seem like they've got some major part to play down the road) so I wasn't surprised. However, I like that Andrew and Dexter got out and got guns, great cliffhanger (though with the cover of #19 I'm sure the new visitor will force a temporary truce of some sort). Each of the characters, Glen and Maggie, Herschel, Tyreese and Carol, etc. seem to be coming into their own. I can fully understand how the characters have started to determine how their story is being told. So far Lori is my favorite because, as crazy as it seems, she makes the most sense. I think the longer they're at the prison the more we're going to get to know these people and the better. Keep up the good work.

As for the art, Cliff Rathburn is making a strong argument for the unsung heroes of comics. Normally all the praise goes to the writer and penciler and maybe some leftovers to the inkers. Let's hear it for the gray tones (and I remembered his name this time).

For the record I was also one of those people that first thought Tony couldn't be replaced (I'm very grateful for his covers, #9 is the best to date, but #19 looks pretty darn cool too), but Charlie is a much better storyteller in my opinion. One of the other letter writers mentioned how Charlie gets the characters across through their eyes (one of the reasons Lori is a favorite of mine) and their expressions. I think Charlie is becoming well known for his subtle, and yet powerful storytelling. Like the zombies, it creeps up on you.

On to standard numbered questions (and you can answer in letter ala Bendis without apology):

1- What type of society do you see this little group developing? Earliest settlers tried a communal approach, but found that the work/reward (as is the biggest problem with Communisim) was dispersed unevenly. Rick is the clear leader (tribal patriarch) but soon he'll have to realize that he could be killed anytime and where would that leave Carl and Lori. Just a down-the-road type question.

You'll have to wait and see.

2-It seems Patricia is the resident "free-spirit" (setting Thomas free only to be attacked). We've also seen Herschel go from "caring for the undead" to slapping around his son for being "disrespectful". Will this become the foundation for "aliances" (ala Survivor), liberal and conservatives?

Would you really want me to give stuff like this away in a letters column?

3- Land of the Dead seems to be pushed up to mid July release. How many times do you think you'll see it in theater?

That all depends on how much I like it the first time.

4 - We'll we see the remnants of government by issue #50? (attempt to

you down)

Probably NOT.

Keep up the great writing (or simply let the characters tell their tale and get the \$%#& out of the way) and I'll keep up the reading.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

I'll do what I can. Thanks for writing Merl.

Dear Kirkman,

Well, it does seem that 18 got away from you. I know some have complained, but I like that the covers don't tend to truthfully represent the story inside. It makes the twists even more exciting. It's like Moore shows us what we expect to see (since he probably expects it at the time he draws them - before you loose control of the characters). So here goes:

1. So we're what, six to seven months after the whole zombie plague began? Are you very concerned with decomposition rates, or are you writing that off like rigormortis and other stuff that confuses things. Adlard's zombies are gettin pretty rotten.

I'm not concerned with it. There's always new zombies out there being made.

2. Are the zombies...getting smarter?

NO.

3. In issue 75, can we see the mirror universe where zombies are nice to people and have little Fu Manchus?

Maybe after the aliens come.

4. Tyreese got bit, didn't he?

Heh.

5. Could you give us a movie casting call for The Walking Dead movie? Who would Simon Pegg play?

Simon would be great for Hershel if he were a bit older. He doesn't LOOK the part but he certainly acts well enough to play Rick. Hell, if I had my say I'd let Simon pick.

6. For Adlard (if available) - What kind of research do you do when drawing wounds and zombies? Do we really want to know?

Well, Charlie is somewhere in England sleeping right now, and this letters column is due to Image soon... so... I'll answer. Adlard has more than enough dead bodies around his house to use for reference. Just ask his neighbors... if you can find them. (I wonder if I'll be apologizing for THIS next issue).

Hey, Undead and Land of the Dead come out soon. I believe Tobe Hooper is working on a zombie movie too. If Invincible works out, maybe there will be a Walking Dead movie... One can dream.

Chris Pitts

We shall see. Hollywood is a fickle bird. Nobody can predict what may be just over the horizon.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Zombies rock. There's no way around it and for some inexplicable reason I'll always be drawn to the Z Word. People automatically think it's the gore*. My response is a recorded one: "Zombies are a classic narrative device". They can be incredibly distant adversaries. They can also be the people closest to you. What better image is there than a husband impaling his freshly dead wife with a machete? You've got drama and horror in the same package. The 'Walking Dead' uses all of that and then some. It's got characters you can care about. It's got the violence that works with the plot. It even has *gasp* suspense. Thanks to your teams work, when people scoff at my Japanese DVD of "Zulu Cannibal Flesh Eaters PART XII" I'll be able to whip out the newest issue of "The Walking Dead". It's solid proof that zombie stories aren't restricted to hilarious disembowelments.

Sometimes you can actually care.

1. Do you ever feel pressured to put zombie action in an individual issue?

Obviously not. The zombie stuff happens when it needs to happen. It will come in waves. As the book goes on there will be large chunks of issues with consecutive zombie action... followed by large runs with NO zombies. I'll be changing things up as time goes on.

2. Will the zombies be getting smarter?

NO.

3. What do you consider to be the funniest kill in the history of zombiedom?

FUNNIEST? Something from Peter Jackson's DEAD ALIVE for sure. The priest getting impaled maybe...

I'd like to sign off by saying that the "Walking Dead" brought me and my brother together. We're such cheapskates that we take turns buying the single issues. Just for the letters page. The decision of who gets to keep the complete set hasn't come up yet, but just like Rick said "We'll burn that bridge when we come to it." It'll probably involve an axe, glue

and
a blindfold.

Sincerely (At two in the morning),
Justin Decloux

Here’s hoping you survive the fight with your brother. Thanks for reading.

Mr. Kirkman,
I’ve never written in to a comic book letter column before (yeah, I know I’m the millionth one to say that). Up until wandering into a great comic shop on a whim about two months ago, I hadn’t been in one in nearly a decade. It’s been great getting back into reading comics, and Walking Dead is certainly one of the best, and my personal favorite right now. I bought both trades and then all the individual books up to present. The storytelling and dialogue is incredible. I can’t wait to get my hands on the four Invincible trades to get more of it.

All of this is why I was so disappointed when I finished issue 18 of The Walking Dead, the first issue I had to wait a month for. Thomas’s death felt like a cop-out. You did a great job of creating an intriguing premise and raising a great question: how would this makeshift society deal with justice? I couldn’t wait to find out what effect an execution would have on the individuals and the dynamics of the group (especially between Rick and Lori). And then you had to have Thomas shot in an act of defense, instead of dealing with the situation of an execution and its ramifications. After demonstrating such great skill in handling other unique situations (the barn is one great example), I was really disappointed.

Hey, you win some... you lose some.

I guess the fact that this event bothered me so much is the exception that proves the rule (the rule that The Walking Dead is the best comic being published right now). Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Schuyler Schuster

Yeah, that’s it. Good point.

Crew,

After 18 issues, I’ve finally decided to write. (And yes, I’ve written to comics before). First, a superb job and yes, the b/w does heighten the fear and emotion of the comic. Now to part you’ve heard, but not like this; 28 Days Later and The Day of the Triffids are both excellent films (and Triffids is a great book, if you read it, avoid the lame sequel - Night of the Triffids). So WD parallels the opening of these films? So what? Don’t let it bother you. Day of the Triffids, isn’t a zombie film. It’s about (book here) mobile, carnivorous plants that run amok on earth after a meteor shower (or unknown space weapon - Wyndham was a bit paranoid) blinds like 90 percent of earth’s populace. The hero isn’t in a coma, he’s been blinded by an attack at a Triffid farm (they are big buisness). As for 28 Days Later, which I loved, it isn’t a real zombie film. The people in it aren’t dead, they’re enraged to the point of being unable to do anything but kill. (They lifted this for the remake of Dawn of the Dead. I don’t go for fast zombies myself). OK, now that that’s settled, don’t let it bother you, OK?

So what do I like about WD? The atmosphere. The unpredicatability of the sequences, not knowing whose going to die next. You’ve kept it from being another zombie comic (Deadworld which sucked and Toe Tags which totally sucked, as well as NOTL: Barbara’s Zombie Chronicles which may have sucked the most of all fell into this), and kept humanity in it. It’s good enough to be a Vertigo title, and one of my favorite monthly issues. The only thing I didn’t like is the Zombies eating animals. If they are going to do this, with their numbers, humanity is simply doomed, since they’ll eat anything that comes across their path. I wouldn’t visit this again. Explain it away that Rick’s smell was on the horse and drop that idea.

I gotta say... we’ve been eating animals for as long as we’ve been around and it hasn’t thinned the herd too terribly much. I doubt zombies are actively seeking out and eating animals like we were.

Some things I’m wondering are:
1 - Have any of the government survived? (I kind of didn’t buy that zombies could take down an M1 tank by the way)

What is it with these questions this month--has it always been like this?

2 - How about survivalists hostile to the government even before the zombies?

All things come to those who wait.

3 - This going to be another freaking “It happened because it happened” or will we get a reason here?

A reason for what? The zombie invasion? If that’s what you mean... probably not.

4 - Please kill Lori off. She’s a pain in the ass, and has been since her introduction. There is no place in the WD world for civilized ways.

Hasn’t she seen this yet? Oh, and kill off Otis ex-girl friend as well. Please do it extremely graphically since she’s another pain in the ass. Herschel could get whacked too.

You should seek therapy. Really--you’re way too into death. These poor characters have done very little to deserve so much hate.

Well, I’m looking forward to issue 19, and I’m glad sales are good. Keep up the good work and don’t be afraid to read The Zombie Survival Guide, everything in it is from movies you’ve seen already.

By the way; two best zombie movies ever: Dawn of the Dead (original) and Shaun of the Dead.

Worst - Anything from Italy.

Rob Morganbesser

Staten Island, NY

WHAT?! Lucio Fulci’s “Zombie” or “Zombi 2” or “Zombie Flesh Eaters” (it’s all the same movie) is really awesome. A zombie--FIGHTS A FRIGGIN’ SHARK in it. It’s really cool.

Hi
I can’t take it anymore!!! My local (2 hours drive one way) comic shop missed putting issue 13 aside for me, and they are out. So now I have issue 14,15,16 but I don’t want to read them before I have gotten issue 13. But I don’t think I can wait anymore, I will read them tonight. I must congratulate you and the crew for making a comic for which I am addicted to. Just keep `em coming, and I will buy `em.

From a walkin’ live one in Norway
Cheers,
Ole

Well, I don’t think khepri.com is doing international orders yet, but you could always try ebay.com or milehighcomics.com for any back issues you’ve missed. Happy hunting!

Kirkman!
I hope you’re happy that I’ve become unhealthily addicted to all the comics you churn out every month! `Cause my wallet certainly ain’t!

As for Walking Dead #18... GREAT. As I was reading it, it finally dawned on me, the cast are starting to go insane! The pressure of surrounded by zombies, rotting corpses, friends deaths and hiding out in a prison has started to become too much!

The level-headed Rick you introduced to us has gone! Great stuff Kirkman!
Also the who’s who list was greatly appreciated, since there’s such a large ensemble of characters that when a name is mentioned I can’t always remember straight away. Keep it up!

Ivan

P.S. how about a special elseworld one shot where the cast of Walking Dead is on the brink of madness, and Mark from Invincible swoops down to save their ass, only to be gunned down by Battle Pope who is on a suicide mission, who has secretly been sent by Marvel Comics because they can see you spearheading Image comics as a danger to them and they are trying to secure you for a full-time contract and make you their slave?... let me know your thoughts.

That probably wouldn’t be a very good book.

Kirkman and Co.:

I have been loving this ride that you all having been putting us on. Just got done reading #16 (I know it is later than hell to just be reading this issue, but I order my comics over the Internet, and then read them in order of least anticipation to most anticipation: you know delay the satisfaction as long as possible!!)

Anyway, after finally making it through ALL those letter pages... (Goddamn man, who d’you think you are, BENDIS!?) I finally decided to break down and write you and let you know what a great job you have been doing. I love this book! I have been a fan of yours and Tony’s since Battle Pope #1 (BTW, Congrats on getting those in color, I’m looking forward to seeing it, although Tony’s style works really well in B & W) and you guys never disappoint. Charlie has been doing great since Tony left, but I still get to see Tony’s work first thing. I took the hint about sharing the love around, and a huge Thumbs up to Cliff, those Gray Tones are great and just the right edge to the panels. That letterer you got could use some practice :) I have never been a huge fan of horror books, I can read them and enjoy them, but usually don’t buy them. I jumped on this because of you and Tony to give it a try, and you have gotten me hooked!

I really like the idea with the jail, although it was kind of a letdown seeing the accountant doing all the killing. I kinda figured that was what was going to happen, everyone thinks accountants are only white-collar criminals...BUT it being tax season and all, I guess you just couldn’t let it get by. Being an accountant myself, I know I definitely felt like cutting off a few heads by the end of tax season.

Keep up the great work!
Patrick Geer

It’s always good to hear from people who found this book because of the work Tony Moore and I did on Battle Pope. You guys are the best. Where were the REST of you five years ago?!

Kirkman,

I just read issues 17 and 18, and 17 is one I’ve been waiting for. I loved seeing Rick finally snap. We’ve been building to this moment since the first issue, and it’s definitely a turning point for the series. You said when you started this series that the Rick at the end would be nothing like the Rick in the first issue, and I think we’re already at that point.

It just gets worse from here.

I do have to say I was a bit disappointed with the way things turned out for Thomas in issue 18. You had a guy hanging on the cover, then totally switch it up. I guess that’s what you were talking about when you said the story wrote itself. Having him shot to death and thrown to the zombies just seemed too easy for him. He killed two little girls! He deserved to suffer much longer! I’m also very interested to know what development you had planned but decided to put off. I’m assuming you still plan to use it later, but when you do, can you let us know what the original plan was for this issue?

IF I
still do it... I'll make
sure to let you guys know.

I do really enjoy how Rick's taking charge now. He's been the leader all along, but now he's being faced with some very difficult decisions where he can't necessarily make everyone happy. How the others react to his control (especially Lori!) will be very interesting. We're also really beginning to see the tension between Rick and Lori build up. Now, I'm really looking forward to that coming to a head.

I'm keeping it short this time... You're whole team is doing a great job, which gives me very little to complain about in my letters. Keep it up!

Jim Amato

Good to hear from you, Jim.

Dude,

Just wanted to let you know this comic is still the nuts. ("The Nuts?") Definitely my most anticipated monthly. Issue 18 ruled. I am glad that Thomas didn't get hung and that Maggie shot him. One thing about seeing next month's cover is it gives you a little hint of what's coming. So, I take it you originally planned to hang him, but changed it at the last minute? Whatever, it was a nice touch.

If a good idea comes to me, and it doesn't match the cover... I'm not going to be bound to what's on the cover. I'd much prefer to do the better story. All the covers are designed to mislead you anyway so they're ALWAYS at least a little inaccurate.

Great idea adding the who's who at the end. With buying it monthly, it is good to have the reminder. Just one thing though. Under the picture of Lori you said that Rick was unaware of the affair. Yet in a previous issue, after Lori announces to the group she is pregnant, Dale mentions the possibility of Shane and Lori to Rick, and he flips out! Babbling about only getting laid once since he got back!! So, was that a mistake or what?

He may SUSPECT but he's not SURE it happened. More on this story as it develops--stay tuned.

Keep it up dude. And man, the cliffhanger endings are awesome!

Daniel Aston

Thanks. The cliffhangers are the most fun part for me.

First Thomas kills the girls and then tries to get Andrea as well. Then Rick beats the holy crap out of him. Now that's dark but when we see Andrea's face and Rick's hands up close in #18, you know things are getting darker.

Are we done yet? No way. Glenn and Tyreese are keeping the killer under cruel conditions and then after that nutball Patricia tries to help him escape Maggie unloads her gun into Thomas! WTF?

Dark, dark, dark! I love it! Here I was expecting a hanging too. The story line and cover ended up being a great red hearing.

But wait, are we done yet? Hell no! Dexter and his bitch boy Andrew have plans of their own. This just keeps getting better and better.

The cover of #19 looks great btw. I dig the way the dead's arms and lower jaws are removed for safety.

In #18's Letter Hacks Merl Key asks about Rick fetching Morgan and his boy. I like this idea a lot and hope we see more of them.

Morgan and Duane are still out there... somewhere.

BTW, being a F4 nut I couldn't hold out any longer and picked up foes 1-4. I'm glad I did.

Along for the ride and loving it!
Chad Cayler

Thanks for checking out Foes, man. I really appreciate it. I think it's a fun book. I had a blast writing it.

Kirkman

In my recent comic shop visit I picked up a dozen or so comics, Walking Dead being one of them. I usually save the more favorite comics for last, and this comic is definitely one of my favorites. However, this specific reading trip I also picked up Vaughan's UXM #58, and it came next-to-last, right before WD. UXM was a great read this month, and I wasn't sure you could follow it. But you pulled through awesomely, what with the shootin' and the body-part eatin' and whatnot in WD #18. Always a trip.

Loving the shit out of everything you're doing; Walking Dead, Invincible, Foes, all that yummy goodness. Got a question though; How 'bout a Sleepwalker appearance in Team-Up? Just to justify the six bucks I spent on Epic Anthology #1 a while back.

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10... how's THAT for service?

Love the letter WD column too, but I'm old school like that. I'm into having a strong comic fan community showing support for the books they love. You, Bendis, and Larsen, the letter columns are as good a read as the stories themselves. I also dig the bio-slash-character-recap pages in the back. There were a couple "oh yeah, I remember him" moments. Whatever happened to that Morgan guy?

-Josh X

Morgan and Duane are still out there... somewhere.

Finally, finally, I just want to say thank you Mr. Kirkman for making the best zombie comic book ever. I mean HOLY SHIT it's everything you ever wanted in a zombie comic or movie, suspense, horror, gore, action and characters you love and hate. I first got the comic at #11, yeah I know I jumped in late but I'm going to do everything I can do to get the back issues, but everywhere I go no one seems to have any back ones, just goes to show how HOT these things are. Now on to the comic, I've been reading on how Mr.Adlard is not as good as Mr.Moore but Adlard drawings are incredible and very well detailed and I don't know how you can get any better then that, so people please, LAY OFF. As for your writing top notch very impressive, it really gets you into the characters mind and makes us feel how they're feeling, very well done. I have been one of the biggest and I mean BIGGEST zombie fan since I was 7 years old. My favourite zombie movie is Day of the Dead, I probably love it more then you. Hell I love this stuff so much I wish one day the dead would really come back to life. I know that sounds crazy, but here are some questions I hope you have time to answer.

1. What zombie movie do you hate the most? And why? For me it was Return of the living dead 3, it was too much of a love story and just a joke.

I can honestly say I've NEVER hated any zombie movie I've ever watched.

2. If you were in a zombie movie what role would you want to play? Survivor, A zombie that gets killed in a gory way, A zombie that's eats somebody or someone who gets torn apart by dozens of zombies. Me I would love being torn apart, it would be such a thrill.

Human victim is cool... but I'd love being a zombie too... as long as I didn't have to rub raw animal parts on my face or anything. That's just nasty.

3. Have you heard of the movie risen, it looks and sounds scary as hell and if you haven't go to www.risenthemovie.com you won't be disappointed.

I'll have to check that out.

4. Which one do you prefer, Night of the Living Dead original or remake? I like the remake, it's more believable but don't get me wrong the original is a classic.

The original... because it's the original... but the remake is AWESOME. It's a much better remake than the Dawn remake and I LIKE the Dawn remake. I think Tom Savini did a GREAT job on that remake.

5. Did you hear that Land Of The Dead has been moved up to June? When or if you see it, will you write down what you thought of the movie?

I can't wait until I get to the letter that says it's been moved up to May. Heh. But yeah--June 28th! I can't wait! I will have seen it by the time this sees print. It's going to be awesome!

I hope nobody has asked you these questions before me, and if they did I'm sorry. (Hey--if they did--I already forgot answering them, so no worries) I hope you print my letter so I can be somewhat part of this walking dead world. So Mr.Kirkman and the whole crew involved keep up the fantastic job. I will always be here and loyal until the end, so signing off (feeling a little hungry)

Adam Carter

Your letter got printed, Adam! Congrats!

One more question! Forgot to ask, and if it's been asked already, I apologize for being a repeated question offender, but are there plans to collect the series in hardback by any chance? Ok that's it.

J. Littleton

Here's a nugget for those of you who read the whole letters column. The Walking Dead will be collected in HARDCOVER in November 2005 in a limited edition hardback that collects issues 1-24 in one HUGE volume. It won't be cheap, though...

Dear Funk Mob,

As I write this missive issue #19 of Walking Dead has just hit the stands. With two years under your belt (I'm guessing here, but with the delays between issues it must be more than two years by now since the first issue came out) (we don't hit two years until OCTOBER 2005--there hasn't been THAT many delays.) It is refreshing that each new issue still carries excitement in manners unexpected. When I ordered Walking Dead #1 all those months ago (I own and operate Sidekicks, Inc, a comic shop in Hadley, MA) it was not a series I expected to make it past the forth issue. That's not a slight, mind you, just an evaluation drawn from years in this business. Walking Dead serves up stories drawn from a genre that has a short track record in the medium-can anyone name a successful long running zombie comic?

Also, it set sail under the Image flag, a company that, to be fair, takes a lot of chances with new titles that do not last pasts four issues.

To be fair--it's ALSO a company that publishes some of the most innovative and entertaining comics on the stands, and MANY more books these days are lasting FAR past issue four. Larsen and Stephenson have really done some good for this company.

With all that weighed against Walking Dead, it managed to exceed my

expectations. I believe it was a confluence of events that brought success to this series. 28 days Later, let's face it, contributed in an invaluable way by raising the bar on the zombie genre. Without 28 Days would the genre have experienced the renaissance we currently enjoy? I think not. Walking Dead, the success of the Resident Evil films, the remake of Dawn of the Dead, they are all products of the excitement that followed in the wake of 28 Days. Walking Dead thrives, however, because of the top-drawer talent that goes into every issue, not because of cinematic trends.

It's rather surprising that I found Walking Dead at all, especially since I'm not a zombie film fan as such, largely because I find gore uninteresting. After seeing the original Dawn of the Dead in 1981 and being rather nauseated by it (a condition no doubt exacerbated by the fully loaded pizza my fiends insisted we eat while watching the film) I did not see another zombie film for over a decade. What continued to engage my interest in the genre is the survivalist fantasy. That fantasy element is an integral component of the genre and the best films- Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead, Return of the Living Dead, Shaun of the Dead- offer that element in equal doses with the gore. While gore is an inescapable element, it is human interaction and reaction to the absurd situation of the recently dead returning to feast on the living that carries the central tenant of somnambulist lore (at least for me): Human ingenuity will drive survival in the face of extinction.

At the Pittsburgh Comic Con in 2002 (the site of what must be an annual Dawn of the Dead cast reunion) while working the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund booth I saw the first 10 minutes of 28 Days Later- about 100 times over the course of the con. All weekend the booth across from mine, who specialized in DVDs of films that, shall we say, have not been released yet in an official capacity, showed teasers for all sorts of films. After seeing the opening for 28 Days over and again I just had to see the rest of the film! Naturally, they sold their last copy before I could make it across the aisle, so I waited several months until the film made its way into the local art house cinema.

While 28 Days did not turn me into a complete zombie nut, it did re-ignite and pique my interest in the survivalist element and that led to Walking Dead. I believe the series succeeds, largely, because of the deft job you do straddling the survival fantasy (the last man on Earth idea is one that seems to have an infinite number of permutations, especially in this genre) and the requisite gore. Rick and company continue to grow as characters with each new story arc, which is absolutely necessary for the reader to have a genuine emotional reaction to the characters losses and triumphs. It's a bit morbid and disturbing, but all the zombie enthusiasts I know share a fascination with surviving in a post zombie holocaust.

Walking Dead provides a monthly (well, almost monthly) (See--there you go again... we're like ONE MONTH (or so) behind schedule... that means we've slipped FOUR WEEKS in almost two years. We're not THAT bad.) installment for that fantasy with all the trimmings. By adhering to a most important idea of the fantasy - slow zombies - despite current popular trends- fast zombies-we feel hope for Rick's world. The remake of Dawn of the Dead proved entertaining, but the idea of fast zombies leaches off the great attraction for me the possibility of survival. Slow zombies allow the reader to hope for the future, something beyond the idea that staying alive is as good as it gets... If the trailer for Land of the Dead reveals anything it's that humanity will find a way, even in the face of genocide. You folks don't make it easy for Rick, et al, but their arduous fight for survival leaves the reader with a modicum of hope that they can survive. It also helps that the book remains engaging, full of surprises (especially when other elements are drawn in, like Max Brooks' Zombie Survival Guide, from which the prison arc seems to have originated), (actually, the prison thing was planned from the beginning, well before the first issue saw print and I've yet to read Max's book--I swear) and suspense. Hell, no other comic

on the stands can boost that any character might die in that issue.

This is just a very roundabout way to say good work, fellas, keep it up! If all the zombie films out there were as satisfying as Walking Dead I'd be the first to queue up to see them all. Until that happens, I'll stick with WD. Although, I would prefer to see the book come out on more predicable schedule, perhaps say, every four weeks! If you maintain the level of quality the series has enjoyed I can, however, forgive the occasional tardy issue.

Cheers!
Robert Grover

Seriously, on the schedule thing, I know this book is late but this issue will be in stores in July. A little late yes, but that's 20 issues in 21 months. You're acting like we're Battle Chasers over here! We did lose a few more extra weeks between issues 18 and 19 but Charlie's wife was having a BABY and he got a little busy.

Sorry to be so confrontational but the schedule is something I care a great deal about. I've VERY dedicated to this, and all my other books and while it's true that sometimes we'll slip in the schedule a little bit I think that we're better than most in this day and age.

Robert,

There was a time, recently, that I bought nothing but Marvel Comics. If it wasn't Marvel, I didn't buy it.

The Walking Dead has changed all that. This comic is the very essence of awesome in its purest, most natural form. For creating it, I hail to you! HAIL ROBERT KIRKMAN!

That's great--now go out and buy Savage Dragon, Sin City, Hellboy, Noble Causes, Ultra, Ministry of Space, Wanted, The Intimates and the BILLIONS of other books that are just as good as anything Marvel has put out.

Anyway, on to business: If you were actually to put aliens in at around issue 75, or maybe killer robots, or something else like that, I will personally send you \$200 for being the best human ever to live. Anyone who wouldn't send you \$200 is probably a jerk. Buncha jerks.

-Lewis Watts, Zombie lover for life

P.S.-
Seriously. \$200.

\$200 for something I'm going to do anyway--SOLD! You're not a very bright man Lewis Watts... and I love you for it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First let me tell you that I have been watching zombie movies since I was about 6 *lets just say I had a messed up child hood*, and when I came across your book at issue #4 I was excited, I could tell from the cover that this was going to be good. Since then I have been buying your books left and right, the guys at my local comic shop know me when I walk in and they immediately tell me if the new issue is in or not, the funny thing is I never started going to that shop until my friend told me of this comic. I think you got this down just right, the endings to each issue just amazes me so much, my favorite one is when Carl shoots Shane, I could hear that gun shoot and smell the burnt powder of the round. Your plots and writing are great and Adlard and Rathburn are some of the most talented artists I have ever seen.

Also I got a few questions,

1) first off I live in the metroplex in Texas and heard that you guys were here in Dallas a while ago! and I missed you guys, So I was wondering if you will be coming back to Dallas any time soon? If so when?

At the latest it will be next year when ZEUS COMICS throws CAPE! 2006. Not sure if I'll be there before that. You should have come to CAPE! this year... it was GREAT!

2) Second of all I been having a debate with my friend on what gun Rick is hold on the cover of issue #4 *I personally think it is a H&K USP 9mm* my friend thinks it is not any particular gun.

You're right, it's an H&K USP 9mm... Tony Moore knows his guns... because he, like Charlie Adlard... is a murderer.

3) And third and final, have you ever read this book called "The Complete Survival Guide of The Undead"? If not you should give it a shot the author writes it like Zombies actually have attacked the world before, and writes it with a serious tone. Well that is all I really looking for the "big surprise" for issue 25.

sincerely,
Steven Ojeda

You mean the zombie survival guide? Could there REALLY be TWO books out there like that?

Dear Funky Kirkman

First time writing blah blah blah you kick so much yadda yadda yadda amazing book etc etc etc...

That's refreshing.

I've been thinking, which is rare, and the topic of my musing is the Walking Dead, or rather it's future. In the issues we're seen so far the heroes have been using up ammunition at a fair old rate and I'm pretty sure that at some point they're going to run out. After all, even with the supplies in the prison, bullets and shells are a finite resource. At some point, not soon, but sometime, the last shell will be thrown and the guys will have nothing to throw at the hoards.

My prediction?

Well, making new shells is out of the question. Firstly they lack materials to manufacture the explosive charge needed for the shells. While you can get chemicals out of nature (cow manure is a good source of sulphur, or so I've been told) recycling spent casings would probably result in inferior bullets and damage to the guns.

So that means bullet less weapons, which means blades and lots of hand-to-hand combat. I'm guessing machete or machete-like weapons will be the order of the day (of the Dead), considering a well placed blow can decapitate a zombie with ease. And with a prison library which I'm sure has some books on metalworking in, the guys could probably knock together a forge and produce some serviceable blades. And maybe a few T-spikes for dealing with the zombies pressed against the fence.

If they're feeling really adventurous with their metalworking, maybe a mancatcher or two. Y'know, those metal jaws on sticks which you grab a neck with a force the zombie to the ground for the coup-de-grace. Probably best for dealing with roamers rather than hoards, but it's never a bad thing to be prepared.

That's my theory of the future. This stuff probably won't happen for a couple of years (book time), so I'll just wait until issue sixty something and see if I was right.

Oh yeah, numbered questions! You love numbered questions!

7. What's with you with people and glasses? Everyone in the book who had glasses is now dead! Chris: wore glasses, and turned out to be creepy, and was killed. Rachel: wore glasses, turned out to be a murder victim in training and was killed. Thomas: wore glasses, turned out to be a sex killer, and was killed. Why the glasses hate Kirkman?

That's it. I'm done.

Man, I spend too much time thinking!

David Lewis

You've got me man... I'm a racist glasses hater... the conspiracy is out in the open. My oh my--what am I going to do?

Robert

Well, sorry to say you got another first time letter writer here. Anyway I finally had to speak up about this series. I started picking this series up with issue one, and it's the best damn comic I've read in a long time. Seriously I place this up there with "Preacher" as my all time favorite comic book.

I always read it last when I pick up my stuff (which is actually a compliment since I always save the best one for last!) As a big fan of Romero's work I think you got it perfect. Except for Thomas being the killer, that was a little predictable. Oh by the way, I never EVER gave a shit about the similarities with 28 days later. It wasn't even really a zombie movie, and I never heard of this role-playing game everybody keeps mentioning. Of course being from a small town in central PA. doesn't help. I totally sympathize with Rick deciding to hang Thomas being the father of three young girls, a nine year old and five year old twins respectfully, I would be tying the knot for him. Being shot was too good for him. Even after the beating! Well, just a few last thoughts for the road. Keep the art black & white. Fast zombies suck ass. and the second aliens start showing up I'll know you've run out of ideas and it's time to find a new favorite book.

Chris Lenkevich

Thanks for the kind words Chris.

The Walking Dead, Eh? I Hate This Fucking Book...It Kills Me. How Much Better Can You Make This Series? OK, Before I Get Into Anything Dealing With This Damn Near Perfect Book: I'd Like To Say Thanks For Giving Me Some Printer Ink In The Letter Pages Of Issue #7. First Time I Ever Slide Into The Back Of A Comic And It Was Not Too Shabby To See (Quite Neat, In Fact). Since I Wrote In Then, I've Hit A Little Cash Rut In Life And Had To Cut Out The Majority Of The Titles I Was Picking Up On A Weekly Basis. I Still Make Sure I Have Enough Money In My Pocket Though To Pick Up 2 Copies Of Each Walking Dead At Least Just To Give Whatever Support I Possibly Can To This Book. I've Been Snagging Up The Trade Paperbacks As Well To Have Them Available For Friends To Read. People Who Won't Even Pick Up "Comic Books" Are Loving This Material (So, It's Not Just Us "Regular Collectors" Digging It). I Personally Have Been Really Enjoying The Way The Story Is Evolving: Not A Single Disappointment Thus Far! I Wrote In Before To Let Y'all Know What A Great Job You're Doing On This Book, And I Had To Tell You Once Again. I'm Down With The Walking Dead Until You See Fit To Wrap It Up...

Darrick Patrick

It's good to hear that you're out there spreading the word, thanks for the support Derek. I must say though--all those capital letters seem like a lot of work. The effort is not unappreciated, though.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Okay, so unlike the majority of people who read this book and write in to Letter Hacks (and judging by the amount of pages you consistently devote to their musings, that's a LOT of people!), I would not classify myself as a fan of the zombie-genre. Sure, I watched 28 Days Later and Shaun of the Dead was hands down the best film of last year (Hi Simon, if you're reading!), heck I've even had a soft spot for the Thriller video, back when that was the only time Michael Jackson was accused of going bump in the night, but when I read some of the letters sent in by obvious zombie-obsessives, I really do question whether I have a legitimate claim to be reading this book. Fortunately, there's one thing that everyone can appreciate, and that's a well-written comic, where characterization is pushed to the forefront.

Dude, you're worthy. I you need to read this book is three bucks--or a retailer who doesn't mind you standing at the rack for a while. There's not zombie fan elitism at work here. We all love one another equally.

After reading #18 I was interested to read that the characters themselves dictated the direction of the finished story. What a novel idea! And after re-reading the issue again, I was just wondering whether Mr. Moore's cover revealed your initial intentions for this issue before the characters' intervention?

It revealed SOME of the initial intentions. Rick WAS going to hang Thomas. There was a LOT more that got changed though.

Nice cliffhanger, too. Does this mean they're gonna be leaving the prison? It sure seems as though the group are moving to a different locale for each "arc": First the campsite, then the farm, then the prison. It's kinda like The Littlest Hobo...with zombies...and without a dog.

I am unfamiliar with this "Littlest Hobo" you speak of.

Nice work on the trades for this book too, by the way. I like the way they're released so that anyone that picks up the trade and likes what they read is able to then jump straight into the "monthly" book from where they left off. I got the first two trades, then #13 and haven't looked back, and I'm sure there'll be a stack of people who just got the first three trades and will be onboard for the single issues as of #19. (Incidentally, I've also caught up with Invincible this way, getting the vol.1-4 trades and then picking up #19-21 plus the #0 issue, so now I can keep on with the single issues without missing a beat).

Oh, one last thing: thanks for the character pages this issue. To be honest, I was a little confused by who everyone was while reading the second trade, but after 18 issues I felt a lot more familiar with the characters, but it's a welcome addition with such a big cast. Will it be a semi-regular feature? Maybe run it at the end of each arc to update everyone's situation?

Anyway, I'm done.

Keep up the good work, Kirko!

Paul Shinn

I shrank the character pages down from six pages to three so I'll probably print it in EVERY issue from now on--just to be on the safe side.

HI R.K.

"Wow" is the only way I can describe this comic. I used to collect a lot years ago but got bored, I was checking E-bay out for Zombie movies and I noticed someone selling issue 10,11 of your comic and I thought I would give it a go. Best buy I have made it was so good I went out and bought all the back issues up to 18 the latest. I got them all Monday once I started reading I couldn't stop (great story and art work the best I have ever seen) please keep it going the story line is so good the only bad thing is I have to wait each month for the next issue but hey I have been spoiled.

Have you thought of doing a story within a story of the characters going into depth of their nightmare, the characters are so good it feels like I need to know everything.

Not quite sure what you mean here but we will be focusing on a lot of the characters in a much more in-depth fashion as the series progresses.

I sure hope the sales figures keep rising you're doing a great job in my eyes and I would love to see this continue for a long time.

Best wishes and all the support I can offer

Regards
Damon Thomas

Trust me, Damon... nobody wants to see this book last longer than I do. I hope it NEVER ends.

Dear Robert et al.

Thanks, matey for printing my letter - reading it back I guess it's kinda waffle! Just want to say I love the direction you're taking The Walking Dead - can't wait to find out who the woman on the next cover is with the 2 zombies in tow. Caught your Marvel team-up...nice story with Blade & the Punisher (I used to love Tomb of Dracula & like the way Blade has found a new niche) & have back-ordered a couple of Brit & Cloudfall to see what the fuss is about. I did have something relevant to write the other day, but can't remember what it was...ah, just remembered! We have a new

Doctor Who series on the BBC, updated for the 21st Century so to speak. The other Sat. night Simon Pegg was the "baddie", tho't you might like to know!

Keep churning out the walking dead!
All the best
Jeff

Cool. We don't get that Doctor Who show here in the states but if we ever do I'll be on the look out for the Simon Pegg episode.

Mr. Kirkman;

I've been reading The Walking Dead since issue #9. I heard a lot about "this great new zombie comic" and decided to check it out. I'm glad I did. It's now my favorite title. I'm hooked! I picked up every issue I could find and both trade paperbacks.

Issue #16 was real good. Carol trying to slip Lori the tongue was a twist. Carol is bisexual?! Who said prison couldn't be fun?! I thought it was cool to see a "zombie kid" at the fence. It would really suck to be a geriatric zombie with no teeth! (dentures?)

Issue #18 was the best yet. Big surprise! Your cover fooled everyone. Thomas wasn't hanged at all.

Can you recommend any other good comics(zombie or not)I'm alway on the look out for some good titles, but there are literally hundreds of new comics out there. Maybe you can have a small list of comics you think are good on your Letter Hacks page.

Well, thanks for the best zombie comic ever. I'm anxiously awaiting #19 and trade paperback #3.

Thanks!
Chad Kanishock

If you'd like to see some suggestions from me on what comics you should be buying go back and read the letters column to issue 17--it's FULL of plugs for other people's books. Winners all!!

Kirkman -

1) I can't tell if I'm amused or annoyed that it takes me longer to read your responses in the letters pages than the actual comic. Please advise.

Look at the pictures longer--that's what they're there for. The Walking Dead is one of the wordiest books on the shelves and it still boasts less words than these letters columns... so it's only natural that they take longer.

2) Why do I love Walking Dead so bad some months and hate it so good others? Please advise.

I got nothing... had this letter run earlier in the letters column I probably would have had a wittier response but at this point I can barely feel my fingers and my brain is mush... sorry.

3) Thanks for the bios. Uhm... please advise?

Dan Feeser
(who, like Duane, likes to talk about bodily functions)

You're welcome.

Hey guys, congrats on the Eisner noms,

Say what you want about readers turning on Rick, but honestly, I just don't like him anymore. Dan Haskell pretty much summed up my feelings on Rick's recent behavior in his letter in TWD #19 and the end of that chapter sealed the deal for me. Suddenly, I want Rick dead. He's messed up. Passing judgement on a killer who was already incarcerated for his crimes (not his fault a bunch of potential victims decided to move in with him - he's already in prison!), unilaterally creating the law of this new world and then breaking said law? And not just breaking it, but killing Dex in cold blood during the middle of a zombie skirmish? No two ways about it, I want Rick's back-shooting, two-faced, double-talking head on a pike, period.

Come now, it can't be all that bad. We're going somewhere with all this--don't worry.

Now having said that, I should also add that this story is amazing page after page and that just because I don't like Rick anymore doesn't mean I'm not enjoying the hell out of this title. If anything, the fact that I now hate Rick is one of the great things about this story. No one is sacred. If he died, I'd go right on reading this book, rooting for Tyreese, Lori, Glenn and everyone else and feeling a smug sense of satisfaction knowing Rick's pushing up daisies. In fact, if anything, it'd do well for the rest of the cast, give 'em a chance to shine. So feel free to ice the self-righteous bastard, won't bother me none and I guarantee I'll keep reading.

One other thing, Gary Timmons asked: "Any good convention horror stories?" and you answered: "Nah, nothing crazy's ever happened to me." and I thought "Oh, I don't know . . . I remember that time you got stabbed in the back by a creepy little killer fetus that lived in his twin brother's stomach." Sorry, I just had to chime in with a plug for HACK/SLASH: COMIC BOOK CARNAGE. After all, isn't it exactly what the lad asked for? A good horror story involving Robert Kirkman at a convention? I'm a huge TWD fan (and successful recruiter of new readers, as well) but I thought I'd take the time to show my buddy Tim Seeley some love (he says he needs it). If you like slashers, zombie cats, zombie bimbos, Evil Ernie or would just love to see Robert Kirkman take a dirt nap, pick up HACK/SLASH!

Oh, yeah... I that book totally slipped my mind when it was coming out--I should have plugged it way more. I'm getting very forgetful in my old age. Tim Seeley is a great guy and Hack/Slash is a very entertaining book. If ANYONE could make me enjoy a comic with Evil Ernie in it--it's Tim... but I make no promises on THAT issue. I'm sure it'll be as good as all the rest though.

My Wednesday started out like any other Wednesday. I go to my favorite comic book shop, here in Montreal, QC Canada, and for like the 19th time I see an issue of the Walking Dead, something I've been wanted to check out but haven't (collecting 15+ books a month is a hefty list for a college student) Then I see 3 TPB's sitting on a shelf, I ask my good friend and store manager, what he thinks. He tells me he's getting a lot of great feedback, so I buy the first volume and go to a coffee place near by to read.

I run back to my comic book store after reading it, and buy volume 2 and 3 as well as issue number 19.

HAH! We got you!!!

They were amazing, I couldn't put them down. I am a zombie fan and a comic book fan. To have a zombie book out there that does the genre justice, is more than just satisfying, it's fucking fantastic.

Everything about the books were great, and true to the zombie genre. The writing is excellent and the art is moving, realistic and just flat out suits the book perfectly.

I just finished number 19 and I am extremely pleased with the series and will continue to read it for as long as you guys keep it going (or up until the zombies start talking, talking zombies are just not cool)

Got it--no talking zombies.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

P.S. Congrats to everyone nominated for the Eisner

Thanks so very much, I'm VERY pleased to be--oh wait--oh yeah--I'm sure Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore are very excited.

Hey there,
I've been reading your monthly comic now since the beginning and I had to say the first 12 issues were pretty enjoyable. But now I've come to the realization that I hate you. And I hate your book. You and your book have made it so I no longer look forward to what were my favorite comics. You and your book have ruined my Wednesday afternoons when I sit down at Quiznos over a beef dip (heh--"beef dip.") and read that latest issues. All I want is TWD, and I hate you for it, you've ruined my hobby. You've taken a much used theme (Zombies) and turned it into some of the best reading I've had in years, and I'm including real books in that. (wait--"REAL books?") Your characters are great. I no longer want to be Batman or Wolverine for Halloween, I want to be Rick, or maybe Glen. Anyway I figure I fluffed you enough so answer these questions. (I was kinda hoping after all the fluffing I'd get a nice slow beef dip--but alas, you have let me down.)

1) Is anyone immune to being bit by a zombie? That would be an interesting thing to see, some badass character covered in bite scars.

That seems a BIT too far-fetched for this book.

2) Are they ever going to leave the Georgia area, I feel it's just not safe there, they need to head more northwest, sure the weather is harsher but as we've already seen the cold weather is a great advantage.

How many people died on the way TOO the prison? They're not looking to travel any time soon. Plus--they kinda ran out of food last time.

3) Why is the girl with the two zombies' and a sword such a badass? I

know we're probably going to find out but I can't wait that long.

She holed up in a "Wheaties" factory for about six months. That's about all it took.

Keep up the good work. Are you going to be at Wizard World East this weekend, if so I want to buy you a beer or three?

Alas, I was not there--maybe if there had been a "beef dip" in the deal...

Hungry for this book like it's the flesh of the living.
Steve

Not as hungry as I am for a beef dip.

That's all she wrote folks. I'm spent (after all the beef dip jokes) so I've really got nothing to say here... other than be here next month for big events in issue 21 and check out Invincible and Marvel Team-Up if you haven't already.

Oh, and I'll be at the San Diego Comic-Con, Wizard World Chicago, and the Baltimore Comic-Con this year--so look me up, I promise to shake your hand and smile. I'll probably even give the thumbs up way too many times.

See you next month. Same bat time--same bat channel.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, check that out, issue 21. And not a day late--well, that's actually a true statement, we're not a day late... slightly more actually, but only slightly. Our scheduling problems as of late are due in part to a busy con season, but also... well, they're my fault. I've been taking a little bit more time on scripts than I should have and because of that, Charlie's been having trouble keeping up. So there, my fault. Sorry about that.

But don't worry, we'll get this thing back on track before you know it. I'm completely dedicated to this book. As much if not more so than I've ever been.

I do have to mention that one hiccup in what will soon be a two-year run ain't bad. So cut us some slack as we get things back on schedule. We'll love you for it.

Last issue in a preposterous letter that asked about the authenticity of a gun on a past cover I jokingly said that Tony Moore is a murderer. Some would argue that murder is not a joking matter and some would be correct. I was totally in the wrong and I accept full responsibility. So please, stop breaking Tony's windows, Tony Moore is NOT a murderer.

In the same response I also said that Charlie Adlard was ALSO a murderer, but it turns out that's a complement in the United Kingdom. Go figure.

In other news, that big hardcover I mentioned as shipping in November has been pushed back to December, but it'll be shipping in EARLY December so it's practically the same time. It'll be worth the wait though, just you wait and see.

Now, let's answer some of that mail you kids seem to like so much.

Hello Robert

When I first saw the cover for issue #19, I didn't know what to think. For a second I thought you were going to bring in super heroes, UFOs and sexy ninja woman for some reason.

But when I read the book my fears were laid to rest. Damn fine stuff as always. I have to admit I love how Rick is evolving as a character. Way backing issue #1 we saw him get a tear in his eye just for shooting a zombie.

But here, he blows Dexter away with a "Cry me a river." Rick has definitely changed over time. But is this a good or bad thing? Is he going to become a stronger leader? Or is he going over to the dark side so to speak where he pops anyone who stands against him?

Time will tell I guess. Great work. Glad to hear sales are still going up. I want this book around for a long time.

Peace,
Eric L. Busby

This book should be around for a good long time, so no worries there at the moment. Keep an eye on Rick, I think you'll be surprised where he's headed.

Hello again.

First a big thank you for printing my first letter in issue 18.

This new chick in TWD 19 kicks ass it would be a shame if she got killed too soon. It seems to be a growing trend, you introduce several characters, put focus on one and the rest are fodder but it is handled with genius.

The zombies are looking more gruesome, when Rick first woke and journeyed to Atlanta the zombies he encountered were freshly dead now they're uglier. A few years later with all the weather like snow, rain, heat, wind, they'd be naked and completely gross.

We'll get there, eventually.

I know you stated this series is zombie movie with the bits before and after the bit we see but every single issue is brilliant, if there were a TV show it would work better in a format like 24, maybe showing a hour of every day for a whole month, show what the characters are doing.

Dan

A TV show? That's a brilliant idea.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I think you do a great job handling the unruly people in your life, from your characters to your readers--that's my overly literary way of saying, "zombies good. Letters good."

Sometimes people write in and treat you like shit, and you take it a lot more graciously than I think I would if I were in your place. Another zombie-comic guru writes in to give you a "grade"? Clearly this guy has some kind of chip on his shoulder about being your elder or something. To your credit, you were nice to him, as you are to all of us who don't know how to act. I buy your book, I tell my friends to buy your book, I tell my students--especially my creative writing students--to buy your book: that's MY critique. Keeping up the good work in spite of the peanut gallery is just another testament to your wonderful talent and savvy.

You make a good point, but where would I be without the peanut gallery? They can critique my work all day and all night as long as they're paying the price of admission. It's all part of the process.

I like the political notes that the book has been hitting lately--I was really struck when Rick asked for the Mysterious Stranger's sword at the end of #19 and then locked her up. Wow! Talk about your safety-versus-security metaphor! And you just sort of waltz from there right to the more humanistic moment between Rick and Tyrese about the "code of justice" Rick cooked up a while back. I know this sort of talk probably makes you nervous, but you're starting to blaze trails that even Romero left alone... man, I just love the way you work a theme from two different sides, and keep the characters from noticing until it's too late.

Thanks.

I just... I can't believe he used the word "grade"!? What the hell!? As though you were sitting around, sweating bullets, the whole time... "Man, the numbers are good, people seem to like it, but what does RALPH GRIFFITH think? He won't return my calls..."

Sweet zombie Jesus.
--Will Bush (No relation)

I see exactly what you mean. Screw Ralph Griffith.

Robert,

Big fan of The Walking Dead. #19 was another good one -- I can't believe Rick turned the gun on Dexter. That's pure cold-blooded. He's going down quite the dark path, isn't he? And how exactly do you TAME a zombie? Guess you can teach a dead dog (so to speak) new tricks.

About your conversion to the Blockbuster DVD system: NOOOO!! Don't support the Evil Empire! You're crazy if you don't go for Netflix. From all reports, Netflix has got a much quicker turnaround (I've been hearing about all kinds of delays through Blockbuster), better selection, WAY better customer service, and, best of all, they aren't owned by a baseball-ruining, faux "family values" lunatic, whose rental stores refuse to carry NC-17 or unrated titles, and which routinely censor videos with no warning labels on the boxes to indicate so (the versions of John Woo's The Killer and Peter Jackson's Dead Alive they carry are laughable, and Bad Lieutenant? Merely a Somewhat Naughty Lieutenant, if you rent it at Blockbuster).

I have never had a Netflix account so I can't really comment on their service. I will say that from my experience Blockbuster hasn't had any delays. I've rarely waited more than two days since the return of a movie before I get my next one. Also, on the NC-17 thing, I don't know how the actual stores are, but the online version of Blockbuster DOES rent NC-17 movies and UNRATED movies. So there. Now, let's talk about some zombies, kay?

Had to get that out of my system.

Don't sweat it.

I appreciated the cast pages last issue, but again this issue I found myself looking at a couple of characters and thinking, "Now, who is that guy again?" Since you're not running an ad on the inside front cover anyway, you might want to think about running an

abbreviated list of characters there every issue. It sure would help this fella out. My brain, she don't remember names and faces so well anymore, especially with a month downtime between seeing those names and faces.

We're running the character pages every issue now. See?

Speaking of brains (here we go)... I thought you might want to check out my new website, *Zombie Eat Brains*: <http://hungryzombie.blogspot.com/>

I'll see if I can get around to checking that out. In the meantime, enjoy the plug.

All the horror blogs out there, not to mention your fine comic, are presented from the point of view of the surviving humans. But who speaks for the poor zombie? The poor, mindless, ravenous, brain-eating zombie? Well, now I do!

It's very funny. So I've been told. And if you don't like it, what is it, like, two minutes out of your life? Come on! (Start from the oldest entry.)

It's been up and running less than a week now (I backdated a bunch of entries to have a generous backlog of content for new visitors), and a mention in your letters column sure would help get the word out about it. And if you don't wanna, then I guess you delete my email, I never hear back from you, no harm done. I promise I won't stop buying your comic. (Maybe.)

Thanks,
Tom Collins

Okay, enough about the damn website--let's get back to the subject at hand--THIS BOOK. Oh, your letter is already over. Damn.

Kirkman and co:

This. Book. Kicks. ASS!!

Most books that my local comic store (Dragon's Tale in Neptune Beach!) tends to recommend are super-hero centric. So I was a bit suprised by all these things I was hearing about a freaking zombie book. Now I've always loved zombie movies, but I'd never read a comic about the fuckers that grabbed my interest. Until TWD, that is. I was content to flip through an issue here or there at the beginning, but I was too busy buying the same old crap from Marvel and DC that I had been reading for years. Anyways, you know the story. I wised up, dropped a bunch of dead-weight books, and dove head-first into TWD, beginning with the first two trades, and then the single issues.

It's good to have you.

Now that all of that is out of the way, I have one thing to say about you, Robert. YOU'RE A SICK BASTARD! I thought for sure the only characters that were safe in this book were Carl, Sophia, and Herschel's twins. Shows what I know. OK, so if even little kids are expendable, I ask you this: is there ANYONE in this book that you consider "safe"? Even if you don't want to say who it is, I'm just curious. I'd go with Herschel. After all, how much horrifying shit can happen to one guy?

Well, nobody is safe. There are times where a character like Hershel might get a pass based on all this shit I've already put him through but that's it. There are no characters I've sat down at said "I'm never killing that guy" about. Now I DO have long running plans for a few characters so they're safe for a while--but I've already changed my mind on a couple long running characters already--like Donna.

Here's hoping this book continues for over 100 issues, or at least ends with an issue of two pages of people dying and twenty pages of zombies standing around. Or aliens!

Keep it up, you sick, sick man.
Chris Carroll

Man, when we get to the last issue (however long that takes) I'm TOTALLY doing that death on pages 1 and 2 and 20 pages of zombies thing. That's so totally awesome. Don't worry, none of you will be reading the book then. We'll be two years past aliens by that point.

Thanks again for another great issue, Deadmen. For a while, I thought I might be reading the wrong book, what with whole pages having no word bubble and all. Yet, despite all the action, we still get some great characterization with the highlight of course being Rick taking out Dexter. That moment reminded me of so many other comics, movies, and shows where I thought someone needed to take advantage of a situation to eliminate a threat, but the never do. I was very glad to see Rick actually do something to end the problem they were having with Dex when he got the opportunity. Rick's really starting to take control and handle problems the way he wants to regardless of what others will think. I can see this forming a rift among the clan in the prison with Rick leading one group and maybe Lori leading a more pacifist group.

What I didn't understand in this issue is how Dex could get into the armory and back out without seeing any of the zombies that ended up attacking everyone. He'd have to run into some of them on his way to or from the armory, so he'd want to make sure he locked it up when he left. I guess it worked well for the story, so I shouldn't complain, but it seemed a little unbelievable to me (although I don't seem to have a problem accepting the fact that the world is full of zombies).

Well, Dexter did know the prison really well. So he was able to get to the armory with little to no resistance. Personally I think Tyreese killing all those zombies in the gym is a little more unbelievable but if you want to latch on to this one, more power to you.

The new girl in the camp is already very interesting. I can't wait to find out where she came from and what she's been doing since the zombie plague began. Has she been alone all along, or is she the sole survivor of a larger group? How will she feel being part of this new group where Rick is always in charge? She seems like a dominant personality, so I wouldn't be surprised to see a power struggle between her and Rick. I also can't imagine that she'll appreciate being

treated like a prisoner for very long. Her arrival just opens up so many great possibilities, that I can't wait to see how it plays out.

The cover for your next issue looks very interesting as well. I know Rick and Lori have been growing apart, but I didn't expect them

to split already (at least it appears that is what is going to happen based on the cover). What could happen in the next issue that causes such an abrupt separation? Does Lori somehow find out what Rick did to Dex and not appreciate Rick "taking the law into his own hands?" I'm not sure how she would find out, so it seems like it must be something else... I really can't think of what, but I can't wait to find out! I don't think I've ever looked forward to each issue of a book in my life. You're just doing a tremendous job here!

Now, get to work on some posters for us! I've already got spots picked out on my wall to put up a few, so quit making us wait!

Thanks for all your great work!
Jim Amato

Posters huh? I'll have to look into that.

This is the first letter I've ever written to a comic, honestly. Could it be possible that #19 was the darkest issue yet? I think so. I really didn't expect Rick to murder the nutty prisoner, and I had to go back and re-read those pages it was such a shock. Nice work all around, chaps. It's certainly the best zombie comic book I've ever read.

Oh, when are you going to do a Walking Dead/Jack Staff crossover?

kelvin green

I have to do Invincible/Jack Staff first.

Mr. Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

I have recently returned to reading comic books after an eleven-year break. To be frank, I was pretty much looking for some bathroom reading material a few months ago when I stumbled upon my comic book collection from when I was ten years old. After rereading the Death of Superman and Maximum Carnage story arcs for the first time in eleven years, I decided comics were good reading material (and trust me, I mean this as a compliment) for the crapper.

I went to a local comic store, looking to update my comic library, and I picked up some of the current mainstream titles. I have to say, I was pretty impressed. I wasn't completely blown away by any of these titles, but I was satisfied with their quality and figured they were about as good as comics could get. That was until I picked up The Walking Dead.

I had glanced at an article about your book on the "comics" page of the IGN website, in which they claimed that this is the best Zombie book on the market. A huge Romero fan myself, I picked up the first two trade paperback volumes to give the series a try. I finished those two books in one sitting. I quickly went out the next day to pick up the third volume and issue #19, I couldn't get enough.

As a Romero fan, this is exactly what I have been looking for: Character-driven Zombie literature. I do not use the term "literature" loosely. This is more than just your average comic, it is art.

The characters are brilliant; you have done a great job at developing them into believable people. You are able to fully utilize every member of your cast, and if there is a character that is just taking up space for one reason or another, you know exactly the right time to kill them off. Brilliant!

What I like the best about this book, especially as it progresses, are the moral "shades of grey" (which match the artwork!) that emerge. It is fitting that a black and white rule such as "you kill, you die" has been cast aside about as quickly as that bullet which passed through Dexter's head. The moral struggles keep this work extremely interesting.

Well that is all that I have to say. This is my first time writing to a comic because, well, I was ten years old the last time I was reading comics. I just want to express my appreciation for all of the excellent work. Oh, and so you know, I hold my TWD collection in such high regard; it has gone nowhere near my bathroom. It's just that good.

From a devoted TWD fan,
Brad Dean

Thanks. But y'know... I think comics are MEANT for the bathroom. So please, don't deny your copies of The Walking Dead the joy of sitting through a good poop with you. When you do that, you deny them their reason for existing. That's like not allowing a lion to eat antelope or whatever or not allowing Tony Moore to terrorize things. Y'know, since he's a terrorist and all.

Dear Kirkman,

After the events of issue 18, I didn't know how you were going to write your way out of that situation. But you pulled it off with the age-old method of throwing zombies at the problem.

See, you guys are starting to catch onto the formula.

The first draft of this letter was all about Land of the Dead, which should be out by the time this letter is printed. (That's pretty presumptuous isn't it--who says I'm going to print this letter?) Needless to say, damn it'll be great. This should be another good year for zombie flicks (aside from Romero's masterpiece). Movies like Risen, Undead, House of the Dead 2, Silent Hill (are there zombies in that?), The Day of the Living Dead: The Curse of the Maya (ok, maybe not that one...), Return of the Living Dead IV and V (err...), Worst Case Scenario (is this out?), and Zombies (but Hooper's movie may be out next year).

I like the idea of the mysterious woman's zombie guards. Our group should employ some. Maybe form a little contingent of zombies, like the whole Manchurian incident in 1942. Seriously, Max Brooks is brilliant.

Maybe I SHOULD read that book...

1. Will we be seeing the zombies "getting smarter" soon?

Nope.

2.
I asked this in Invincible, but could you fantasy cast your ideal TWD movie? Come on, Simon Pegg as Rick!

You think he could play Rick? Really? He's a fantastic actor... but Rick? I mean, Nick Frost MAYBE but not Simon. ;-)

3. Can we see more of Sleepwalker!? Please! (ok sorry, wrong book, but I've already been printed there once...)

THROK!,
Chris Pitts

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10 and will be returning for the "LEAGUE OF LOSERS" story arc that will be running from issues 15-18. You're in LUCK! I love that guy!

Hey Robert--

I got issue 19 last week (loved it... duh), and realized that I'm still thinking about issue 18 so I figured I'd write. I just wanted to tell you how much I loved the split between what the cover was promising and what actually went down. I know, it wasn't planned... but boy did it make the whole thing feel alive and dangerous. I (like you, apparently) had been waiting since the end of the previous issue for a hanging, and then shit just started spinning out of control. I guess what I'm saying is, thanks for letting the characters take the lead and doing what's ultimately best for the comic.

Yeah, it sure was fun, but I'll be damned if it didn't make writing 19, 20, and this issue a pain in the ass. I mean... I had to change my entire plan.

Now that I'm writing, let me make a few more comments. Issue 19. Right-fucking-on. I'm pretty much up for whatever; I'm feeling really well taken care of by your storytelling. So when you slow it down for a couple of issues, I'm digging it. Now, you're throwing a kick-ass babe with a sword into the mix, well that's fuckin' fun as hell. Can't wait to see how she develops. And the closing note between the guys discussing the practical and moral implications of murder -- I mean, this is what it would get to if you were in a situation like this, right? The Walking Dead continues to be a deeply satisfying ride.

I'd also like to add my two cents to something Corby Daniel brings up in LetterHacks, about the resurgence of horror being a reflection of the times. I totally agree, the uncertainty of the times, both in our ability to make do in our everyday lives and abroad, draw us to scenes of horror, both as distraction and catharsis. By getting close to a scary situation that is controllable (you can always leave the theater, shut off the TV, close the book) we feel some small mastery over the fears we have every day about survival. But within that larger genre of horror, it is also no coincidence that zombies have returned. I don't think it's simply that 28 Days Later was popular and now is being copied (that's not aimed at you, Kirkman). (better not be) Zombies resonate potently with the specific fears of our times. They are in the zeitgeist for a reason, and they've been coming for a while. Specific monsters relate, or resonate, specifically to different kinds of fears. I'm not sure if a close reading of history bears this theory out, but you have body snatchers and space aliens in the Fifties, during the fear of communisim, and now we are being overrun by zombies. Clive Barker has this to say on the subject:

Zombies are the liberal nightmare. Here you have the masses, whom you would love to love, appearing at your front door with their faces falling off; and you're trying to be as humane as you possibly can, but they are, after all, eating the cat. And the fear of mass activity, of mindlessness on a national scale, underlies [the] fear of zombies.

We live in zombie times. Fear of the mob, of the other, of the "rest of the world" (or of the red/blue states) losing their goddamn minds and pulling the few among us left living sane lives -- pulling us from all sides into the pit of madness -- goes to the core for us right now. As the nation continues to polarize, and the "other side" is seen as increasingly dangerous and difficult to understand (from either side), a world in which humanity itself dies only to rise up and tear the flesh from our very limbs seems less like fantasy and more like allegory.

Not to say that zombies can have only one meaning. Interestingly, in the UK, when fear of mad cow disease was rampant, the film Dead Creatures seemed to quietly address itself to that particular concern, not from the more common point of view of fear of the external, but from an internalized POV -- fear of the self. Cool little movie. Tweaks the Pittsburgh conventions in a fun way.

Couple of random parting shots... I've been seeing the TPBs at the top of Amazon's horror graphic novel best-seller list. All three of them, right at the top, one-two-three (or, technically, three-one-two). That's great news (for all of us). Congratulations. Here's to TPBs number seven, eight, nine, and ten!

They're on the way, to be sure.

And about the poster... would it be a Tony Moore poster or a Charlie Adlard poster? Talk about a toughie. My vote is for one of each. I know, some kind of crass, economic science of diminishing returns will probably get in the way of my dream: Tony's cover to issue 9, with Rick reflected in a zombie's eye, in full-ass color, and a Charlie-drawn poster, more overtly depicting zombies, in black and white, maybe with some color in the text. With dreams as specific as these, it's hard for them not to get dashed. But I, for one, would pony up for one of each (support!).

Oh, hey, and about MTU. It's like hanging out at your pal's day job. I always feel like whispering to someone, "Psst, I know this guy... I know what he's really into..." Love the light tone. Keep it up. And more Moon Knight! The title should be MTUWMK.

Heh, actually, I think THIS book is the stretch. MTU is what I'm REALLY like: silly, fun, retarded.

It really just keeps getting better and better (talking about TWD now...), and I can't wait to see where we're headed next.

Take care, man,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Thanks for the kind words, and the Clive Barker quote. That's a good one, thanks for sharing.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Finally someone realizes the joy of

killing characters in comics. There are no actors to deal with, no need to hire new people to replace them. I don't understand why every comic doesn't see the light. I'd kill off X-men every day and never bring 'em back. So many other comics live in fear of losing their fan base by killing off some super hero that a bunch of people like. Screw that shit. Comics are a great medium of story telling because the only boundary is the writer and the artist's imagination... And drawing ability, I guess. If I had a comic, it would be a bunch of crappy stick figures with chainsaws. I just finished #19 and thought it was the most interesting yet. I like the whole prison scene so far. The introduction of the new sword-wielding woman was great! Zombie pets are a good idea. Just cut off all the parts that could hurt you and lead them around to keep the other zombies at bay. I hope to see a scene where every character has a pet zombie.

Tyreese is my favorite character. He seems to know that they're all fucked anyway, so he might as well make the best of it. Rick is a good main character, but he's a cop, and I don't trust or like cops as a general rule. Cops need order, their job is to keep everything in the green. But this whole zombie situation is going to need people that live in the red. Rick can't keep everybody civilized. He can't even keep himself civilized, even though he's trying. What I really dig about your book so far is that people don't have to be bitten by a zombie to become one. Hell yeah! That's some scary shit, knowin' that you could die of the flu and then get up and start eating folks. There are a lot of bald zombies, but the hair would probably be some the first bits to go as you walk around for miles rotting away. My wallet thanks you for the cheaper trades. I can hardly pay for food sometimes, let alone a \$25 dollar trade paperback. Keep up the killing and I'll be there to read about it.

-Zach Michealis

Yeah, a lot of people talk about our cheap \$10 volume 1 TPB but even the other volumes at \$13 are super cheap for a six issue TPB. Most trades containing six issues are \$16 to \$19. We're doing our best to give back to the fans in every way we can. We're cool like that.

Dear Robert

The newest arrival to the cast of The Walking Dead is a strutting package of cool. Perhaps a bit too much. Urban. Dressed to impress. Dreadlock hairdo. She even handles a katana, the samurai long sword. Definitely a hip thing. She also has that cold "don't f@ck with me" attitude. Is she a former lawyer? She also carries something valuable. New data. By removing the lower jaw and the arms, she rendered her "escorts" harmless. A sort of zombie neutering. She was also able to roam among "roamers" with relative comfort. Hmm...

Rick's cold-blooded murder of Dexter was logical but kind of hard to take. Now that he is in a secure setting he must wrap his head around rules and a work agenda. Otherwise, he'll continue down the road to insanity.

Nice to see Otis again.

I love TWD. I love Charlie's artwork, and I love it in B, W and grays. BUT each time I see a Tony Moore cover, I feel a need to see a full color Dead long story. Be it an annual or a graphic novel.

Nah. Color would just wreck things.

The Land of the Dead trailer looks great, doesn't it? Hope it does real well so Romero will get the financial legs, so we won't have to wait so long between movies.

Keep up the great work

Victor Rosario Fermaint.

Yeah, I think the single best thing that came out of Land of the Dead was the possibility of MORE Romero zombie flicks. If he doesn't do at least ONE more sequel I'm going to be very disappointed.

Dear Letter hacks (the best letters page...ever),

I've been following this book and Mr. Kirkman sense I read the 2099 relaunch - I have gone back and bought the wholes set - This is the only non-Marvel book I get

WOW--really? The 2099 books are what got you into my work? REALLY?! Heh. That's pretty cool. Welcome aboard. You should try INVINCIBLE, though--if you like the Marvel stuff.

I've just read issue 19 - I must admint I was weary of the cover - a woman with 2 zombies in tow makes sense in the walking dead universe - but just looks a bit too "out there". Anyway after reading this looks to be a great arc - I thought they would have to move on from the prison but no Rick killed Dex - This was a big surprise for me. As for the ending - yeah its about time the "You kill you die" was addressed. I mean Tyreese killed his daughters boyfriend, nothing was said will this be detailed later?

Well, yeah. Of course.

Anyway time for my fave zombie movies:

- 1 - Dawn of the dead original
- 2 - Night of the living dead original
- 3 - Dead alive/Breaddead - the energy of the film is insane

Ok now I have a couple of questions:

1 - what do you think would happen if this happened in the Marvel universe? Personally I believe there wouldn't be many heroes left. Who would you pick as survivors? I'd have to pick Punisher (for his survival instinct) and Cage (unbreakable skin). Who would you think would be left?

I've been thinking about this a lot lately, actually...

2 - I hope you never get bored with this book - I could see this becoming Rick's son's book once Rick passes on.

3 - If Romero was to offer to make a movie/TV show of TWD would you be interested?
Why? You got his number?
4 - Would you ever let anyone else write this book?
No.
Anyway I've taken a ton of your time.
I hope to god you print this.
Thanks for the great books.
Craig "Buhbuhrayspidey" Lowrey
Thanks to that "GOD" guy... I'm printing your letter. Make sure you thank him.
Kirkman,
Do you remember the days when whole issues would pass without anyone being killed? I know your just doing this to piss me off, I'm that important to you.
Those days will be here again. Nobody died in this issue right?
That said I'm not sorry to see Dexter go. The cast is having enough trouble building a safe haven without him walking around all twitchy and dangerous. I'm a little afraid that Andrew got away and I fear that he will bring more trouble to Rick and the gang in days to come.
Love the new woman. I think she'll be a great asset to the team. Her Idea of using "declawed" zombies to move freely on the outside is pure genius. I hope to see other creative uses for the dead in the future. Her use of a sword also shows good judgement. With the tools available to them the others could probably fashion swords as well, or some sword like weapons that will be more effective in killing the dead.
I'm concerned about Rick. First he tried to kill a man with his bare hands, and then killed ol' Dexter. The risk is that he's started down a long slippery slope. A problem with soldiers who have seen a lot of close quarters combat is that killing becomes to easy for them. This gets them into trouble when they have to deal with civilized society again. Rick went from fighting side by side with Dexter to killing him in a second. There wasn't much thought between opportunity and action and even afterwards he didn't seem overly upset and I think even Rick fears how easy it was.
I normally don't comment on letters in Letter Hacks but I have to say something about Ralph Griffith's critique or the art in Walking Dead. A C+/B-? Is he reading the brail version of the book? I personally couldn't imagine the art being any better (Page 8, issue 19 was particularly good). Griffith's just being pissy because he put out a book that nobody's ever heard of so he has to find something to criticize about Walking Dead. C+...
Yeah--fuck that guy!! Heh.
I can't wait to see what happens next, keep up the good work, fuck you for killing those little girls, and glad to hear that the book keeps selling better and better.
Not as happy as we are, I'll bet.
Ken Lindgren
Rochester, MN
P.S. I've got a Marvel Team Up Question. Now I know in your run on the book you've often had more than two hero's team up in the book, or at least had two teams of two heroes meet up help take down the bad guys. But when the previews come out there are never more than two heroes (or one hero and one super-team) advertised for the book. Is this just tradition? Could there be an MTU where Cadaver, Maverick, and Turbo (can anyone think of three lamer heros?) all team up, or are you contractually obligated to keep the number at two?
It's just easier for the artist to draw two characters instead of more. The covers for 11 and 13 feature a group of characters. You happy now?
Dear Robert et al,
Well, if I'm going to read these lengthy letters pages I might as well try and get into one of them.
#19 was the most exciting comic that came out that week, and in a market where Grant Morrison is writing five titles at once that's pretty remarkable work. Could it be that, now Rick has crossed some line by shooting Dexter, he's going to snap out of this delusion he's been slipping into? Ever since they found the prison, Rick's been kidding himself that he can rebuild civilization single-handedly, that he can apply all the old rules to a new situation. This mania seemed to peak with his planned 'execution' of Thomas, where Rick seemed to think that, if he dressed it up as an official killing, it would be any better than just shooting the mad bastard.
Blowing Dexter away seems to have brought the new situation home. For now, there's only one rule - see threat, eliminate threat. But what constitutes a threat? They're already locking up any 'strangers' over night, but how do we know the regulars are any less likely to go over the edge, especially after all they've lost? What do they do to people who take too much food, or leave the wrong gate open - both actions that could endanger the wider group?
The arrival of ninja girl in #19 might help to bring Rick, and the dopier members of the group, back to their senses. She seems to have adapted to the situation in a pragmatic but ruthless way (love the way she decapitates her pet zombies with one swipe once they've served their purpose), but does

anyone else want to end up the badass she seems to have become?
Congratulations on the Eisner noms. As someone who came to the book *because* of Charlie Adlard (I've been a fan since his 'X-Files' and 'Doctor Who Yearbook' days), it's a pleasure to see him get recognition. Tony's covers are pretty special as well, and well worth the attention. Here's hoping for a writing nod next year, huh? (yeah, no shit) It can only be a matter of time. Although, knowing how slow these award things can be, you'll probably win it after the aliens have been introduced and the book has gone to hell.

Until that happy day, this remains my favourite comic.

Cheers,
Mark Clapham

Thanks.

Hi Robert, Charlie, Cliff & Tony

Just thought you (& other George A. Romero/Simon Pegg fans) might be interested to know , that George A. Romero was so impressed by "Shaun of the Dead" (according to my daily paper), that he gave Simon Pegg & Edgar Wright (his mate in both Spaced & Shaun) cameos in "Land of the Dead". Neat, huh?!
You didn't disappoint with the women with sword & 2 chained zombies episode BTW - very good, though I thought she might have been loathe to give up her weapon so quickly.

Dude, she just wanted into the safe place. There's not much she wouldn't have done.

Anyway, can't wait for the next issue (& even more so for #25!). The great thing about The Walking Dead being occasionally late is the surprise I get when the comic shop lady, Debbie hands me the latest copy when I walk through the door. My other fave title (apart from the Bendis/Maleev run on DD) is "Strangehaven" which comes out twice a year if you're lucky, but usually just once! Well worth waiting for as is TWD.

That's one way of looking at it.

And before I go, I got a little stack of back issues today through the post of DH Zombie World. Haven't read them yet...you heard of these?
Take care & just keep on doing what you do best!
Jeff

Heard of Zombie World? I wrote the introduction to the new Trade Paperback coming from Dark Horse.

I'll have to say that you have an excellent book all the way around. I'm in the intermediate stages of producing a comic book. Id like to know who designed your 'Walking Dead' cover logo. Thanks, keep up the good work.

Dave

The Walking Dead logo was designed by Brett Evan's, Image's director of production. He's also designed the logos for Invincible, Tech Jacket, Capes, Cloudfall, and Brit.

This right here is my first official letter to any comic and I felt you guy deserve it the most. I remember seeing The Walking Dead #1 and picking it up flipping thru the pages and loving every min of it. I only read three comics yours, a certain group of reality hoppers, and a man who loves to use his boom stick (ok that sounded kinda gross). I love the story and the cover art (that's what attracted me to the comic in the first place. Well keep up the good work.

Shane
p.s. Please put this on Letter Hacks!!!

OK!!!

Dear Walking Dead:
The Walking Dead #18 made me prepared for the upcoming George Romero movie Land of the Dead! Seeing our heroes behind the prison gate as the zombies rip flesh apart and entrails flying all over, leaves a dark mark on the mind. These zombies are always in a feeding frenzy, they are savage beyond any known reason. The living needs to stay focus and fight these monsters, but when they fight amongst themselves and decide to separate is the worst mistake ever. Divided they will truly fall. What the hell are they doing? Those echoing words...get the fuck out of my house, gave me the shivers! I see bad things on the horizon, very bad things. I just wonder why Michael Jackson isn't part of the undead, the man looks like a walking

corpse, whiter than any zombie, has falling body parts (such as his nose), I mean isn't Michael Jackson a zombie? Think about putting Michael in the story, food for thought. I can now see Michael and a group of zombies doing a line dance to the song "Thriller"....whreeeeee heeeeeeee, heeeeeeee!

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

Michael Jackson appears in the background of almost every issue, dude. Pay attention.

Hey there, Mr. Kirkman--
You mentioned googling zombie toothpaste, the strangest zombie product you know... piqued my interest, but I couldn't find the durned thing. Was this a real product, or ineffective facetiousness? Seriously, I can't stop my zombies' teeth from falling out. (Or their eyes, arms, etc.).

By the way, any thoughts on Romero's upcoming movie? I'm psyched, but I'm afraid it might suck. Won't hurt your business, though, I'm sure. Peace.

Mered Parnes

You're obviously just not looking hard enough. Try again.

Let me start off by saying that
I simply

love the book. It is an utter light at the end of the tunnel for us major zombie fanatics! Zombies just don't get their dues in movies and especially comic books. Deadworld made absolutely no sense. Land of the Dead really blew chunks too (utter disappointment considering Romero was attached). I've seen so many "zombie" serials which actually just suck harder than Jim Neighbors did on Liberacce!

In regards to Issue 18, Tracy Kent wrote about rigor mortis in the letters column. Before people start in with "how the hell would you know?!" My credentials: I used to work for a mortuary handling removals, dressing cases and the like, even so far as handling the County Coroner contracts where we bagged the bodies and then taxied them from the scene to the county fridge. Well over 1000!

Let me clarify something once and for all as I'm tired of people stating this. While Tracy is somewhat right about what he says in regards to Rigor Mortis, he is also wrong. True rigor sets in after the deceased has been such for a prolonged period of time. True, this renders the corpse all but immobile. BUT, the effects are only temporary. Corpses fall out of rigor after a few days. The corpses then become pliable again and is a further step towards decomposition. This is also a key factor in the Coroner's timetable in determining how long the deceased has been such.

Sorry it took so long to write in.

Sincerely,
Reaper
Editor-in-Chief
The NAM: National Airsoft Magazine

P.S. Every October, we host an airsoft event for the Halloween season called Operation: Biohazard which gives people the chance to live the zombie experience...from both sides! <http://www.nationalairsoftmagazine.com/biohazardhome.html>

Thanks for all that cheerful talk rigor mortis. Maybe I should be checking these links out before plugging them, eh? Maybe... maybe later.

Letter Hacks,

First off, let me congradulate Charlie Adlard and Tony Moor on their Eisner nominations.

Second, let me congradulate Robert Kirkman for making "the must list" in issue 826/827 of Entertainment Weekly (page 74). I love their magazine and think that you really deserve the honor.

I am still digging the book. I still can't wait to get the next issues. Still love the characters, covers (a poster of issue 18 would be framed and hung in the house), art and basically the whole damn thing!

You mentioned in the letters column that us fuckers better like the letters columns. I assure you, I love the letters column and I know that a friend of mine 3 states away does too. Whenever we talk, we end up talking about TWD.

I really liked issue 19. When 18 had finished I was kind of shocked that Dexter was kicking everyone out. I recall in one of the letter hacks (around the mid-teens) you saying that the prison was going to be around for a while. Now that I have finished 19, it doesn't look like they are going anywhere anytime soon.

Yeah, I should keep a closer eye on my comments here so that I can make sure I don't spoil any future cliffhangers from now on.

I honestly want to see them in the prison for a bit longer. I've read some of the readers want them on the run and in danger the whole time. That is always good entertainment, but I have always liked the challenge characters face when trying to rebuild their lives after a catastrophe. I still say that this is why the original Dawn of the Dead was better than the remake. They tried to "live" in the Mall even with a baby on the way. They tried to create a sense of normality knowing the hordes of zombies are out there. In the remake, it was like they were just waiting it out. I think there is a lot more you can do IN the prison with your characters, than you can on the run.

I agree.

I like how you encourage your readers to write in with questions and the fact that you answer them. I know there must be a lot that you just can't fit into the book, but you filling us in with what we ask about is the biggest reason I read the letter hacks. A lot of people have had some good questions that I didn't even bother to think about, you answer them, I go back and read your books again (usually for the 3rd time). So, of course, I have a few more questions for you:

1) How in the hell did Andrew manage to find his way into A block if it was locked down? (or was that what Dexter wanted everyone to think, but it was just crawling with zombies)

The prison is more or less completely unlocked now that the electricity is out. Also, the guards last act before they abandoned the place was to set the prisoners free to they could fend for themselves and after that they left the place more or less unlocked.

2) After Andrew managed to get into A block, how did he get past all the Zombies to get the guns and get back out alive?

Dexter was with him, and he knew the area pretty well. Luck was on their side as well.

3) Most importantly, why in the hell didn't Andrew (I'm seeing a pattern here) tell Dexter about all the zombies? Dexter seemed quite suprised to see them. (or did Andrew mess up, and forget to lock up behind him?)

A-Block is a pretty big place. Roamers only roam if they have something to roam to. Dexter and Andrew could have traveled to the armory in A-Block when all the zombies were spread out inside. They could have only encountered one or two zombies on the way there and on the way out. But all the zombies in the place would have heard them and would have started moving toward them, to the door that Andrew left open. Why he left the door open is still up for debate, and may even be revealed somewhere don't the line... I mean, I had to keep Andrew alive for a reason right?

4) If Andrew was cunning enough to get in, get some guns and get out, does this mean we are going to see him again? He could really become quite a pain to the survivors if he wants revenge on Rick

for taking his home and killing his lover.

All will be revealed (hey, I gotta get something from Bendis for putting my number on NEWSARAMA.)

(Questions done.)

I really like the addition of the female character in 19. We have referred to her as the zombie tamer, but I'm sure you will give her a name. I think the possibilities with this character are endless. She's another woman. She's been out in the world and survived. She could make things better or make them worse. Only you know and I'm sure you won't let us down.

You also mentioned "Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on." Thanks! Hershel is one of my favorite characters and its nice to know that you have plans, other than zombie food, for him.

See, that's what I mean... I never should have said that. Forget I said that. Hershel could die at any moment. I swear.

I am SO glad to hear the book is on solid ground.

Keep up the good work (even if it comes out late)

Mike Gineman
Wauseon, OH

P.S., I told myself that I wouldn't write in to a comic book again, but your book is just THAT good. Damn you for making me embrace my geek-hood.

Welcome to the dark side, GEEK!

Kirkman,

Well yeah this is my first letter to a comic and all that and the book is really great and all sorts of compliments you've heard a million times before. My main reason for writing is to be an annoying fan and point out that those two armless zombies that got their heads cut off in issue 19 by that new character mysteriously grew arms when they were laying dead on the ground. Now maybe there is something in the zombie mythology that I missed that explained this but I do not know (if zombies started immediately regenerating that would just make things crazy). It just struck me as odd to see something like that get through without someone saying "Hey those zombies don't have arms!". Maybe 20 years from now when the whole alien arc is through you can go back and do special editions adding in animated side kicks and removing extra appendages. Oh and while I am here let me compose a list of questions.

You didn't know cutting the head off a zombie made them grow arms? How do you think all those four armed corpses keep popping up? Read the handbook, silly.

1) Pretty early on the characters started referring to the zombies as zombies. They just automatically knew what they were. Does this mean that they live in a world that contains Romero films and fiction zombie stories previous to the incident? It didn't seem like they had to come up with the word on their own. Well that is really the only question I have but I felt like making a list none the less. Everything about the book is great. Thanks.

-Dustin Sims

The term "zombie" existed long before Romero's movies. I think of this book taking place in our world. Only their October 2003 went a little different than ours (that's when I picture this book starting). So with that in mind... all our movies would have existed for them. I doubt anyone in the book so far is a Romero fan. I mean, they certainly haven't MENTIONED anything.

Dear Dead Heads

I don't think you guys need to be told that the book is great but I'll do it anyway. Great book. Love the artwork, love the story. This is the best comic since Valiant comics. The story comes first and that's what is most

important. I know that you don't want to water down TWD but I would love a mini series about anything. (anything?) The beginning of the outbreak would be great to see Shane as a good guy would be cool. Now that I'm done sucking up, I'll get to the point. I want to be a zombie. Is there any way for me to send a picture of myself and be drawn as a zombie? I'd love to be one of the zombies that kills a major character. If at all possible I would also like to buy the artwork of the comic I would be in.

Thanks for writing a great book.
Jason.

I'll have to think about that whole having real people appear as zombies thing. I could talk to Charlie about it. Maybe we'll run a contest.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead #19. A truly great issue!!! I really dug the cover to this one. Before reading it I as thinking: Wow! Who is this bad-ass chick with the sword? I really like Tony Moore's art, but I'm in no way complaining about Charlie Adlard's, just try to keep Tony on the covers as long as you can. They're truly cool! And also, applause to you for creating such a great story. This book is excellent and the writing is great, not just an awesome zombie story, but a story that I think people who aren't especially into zombie stuff could enjoy, too, if they'd give it the chance. Bottom line: This story is great!!! It's really turning into the "zombie movie that never ends" vision that you mentioned in the introduction of the first trade. Again, kudos to YOU, Mr. Moore, Mr. Adlard, Mr. Rathburn, and anyone else who has ever influenced or had a hand in this great tale that's got us all begging for more at the end of each issue.

And now the questions:

1. In the above-mentioned introduction to the first trade (and forgive me if you've already addressed this) you said that you wanted this book "to be a chronicle of years of Rick's life". Is this still the case? You mentioned that no character is safe and I just wondered if this pertained to Rick as well. Is this truly Rick's story? Maybe (FAR in the future, hopefully) you'll end the series with Rick getting killed. Maybe he'll be

offed
in issue #20. Who knows?
Just thought I'd ask...

So far, yes--this is RICK'S story. But I'm not opposed to killing him if the opportunity to tell better stories as a result presented itself. Trust me when I say NOBODY is safe.

2.Why did Tyrese tell Rick that he should rethink his no killing stance? Is he planning something? Did he already do something that would prompt him to say this?

Well, Tyreese himself had killed Chris not too long ago and he just witnessed Rick killing Dexter. I think Tyreese meant neither of them were following it so Rick should probably rethink it.

3. Why did Rick ask the chick with the sword (We haven't found her name out have we?) to give up all of her weapons? Will this be a standard practice for any newcomers to the prison? I guess she'd have to prove herself trustworthy in order to regain her weapons, but when and if she does, GIVE HER THAT SWORD BACK!!! She was awesome with it, man!!!!

The group will be very cautious around all newcomers after the things they went through with the prisoners. It's something Lori has been nagging about since Tyreese showed up. It just took Rick a while to catch on.

4. Is that Lori who's "alone" on the sneak peek of the cover of issue #20? Oh well, I guess by the time you print this, I'll already know... Maybe Rick DOES die in issue #20! Hmmm.

Maybe.

Well, I guess that's all the questions I can think of off the top of my head for now. Hey, put my vote in with all those who have requested a poster. That would really be cool. And keep up the good work all of you guys! This is a damn fine book!!!

Lloyd Duvall, Jr.

At this point I think it's only a matter of time until we get the poster.

Kirkman,

Hey, I was going to write you a letter as soon as I was done reading issue 19, but didn't... Yesterday I saw your little write up in Entertainment Weekly and thought that I should write to say 'way to go' and 'superdupper' and all that sort of thing and then say what I was gonna say in the first place. I was a little bummed that they used a picture from Invincible and focused on that more... mostly because I haven't got around to reading it yet...but now that your working on a script for it I guess I should get caught up before the movie comes out and I have to get the TPB that says 'Now a major motion picture' or whatever.

That being:

1) Oh my freaking crap! That issue 19 is off the hook! (As they say in poor neighborhoods.)

What's THAT supposed to mean?

2) That is an interesting claim...the one about people being able to see your balls from outer space... I don't think I'm really astronaut material, and have never minded that...until now....

You're saying you WANT to see my balls?

3) You said that you were only about 90 or 95 percent sure you were coming to Chicago, well, you should go for sure! I would be happy...so you should come....you know, IF the town is big enough for you AND your balls....

It's not, but I'll come anyway. I'll be there, selling my stuff and signing autographs.

4) OK, what is the thing with Milla Jovovich? Obviously she is a pretty ok actor (Messenger, Dummy, Million Dollar Hotel) but that cannot save the second rez-evil flick. IN WHICH she really doesn't even act...OR fight Zombies... there was a HUGE lack of zombies in that second one...ugh...anyway, I am interested in hearing some real reasons for your putting her on such a pedestal because it seems like an infatuation...

Guilty as charged.

5) The first time I wrote in (I think that was in issue 13, if that even matters) I told you to read The Zombie Survival Guide...well, I'd like to apologize for being reader number one million to do so. Some how I didn't catch that until I was reading all the issues over again...ANYWAY! This comic is now my cornerstone of comics. It really is. Pass my gratitude on to your art team as well please. Here's looking forward to issue 75!

David

Charlie, Cliff... you heard the man.

I just caught the tail end of "Dawn of the Dead" and the beginning of "Dream of the Dead" on IFC. Apparently we can expect the first reoccurring character ever in Romero's Zombie movies, one of the biker guys from Dawn is comming back as a zombie in Land. I'm dissapointed, I wanted him to come back alive. I would have liked to hear about his life on the road, how he was able to survive. That's why I like your comic.

Ken Lindgren

Obviously, he wasn't able to survive. That's Tom Savini, though... you can't really be a zombie fan and not know who he is.

I don't blame Rick one freaking bit for taking that shithead out!!!! One quick question, one of the zombies had a cat hat on, like the one the earlier survivor that got bit before they left Atlanta. Same guy? Great book and love the team-up shit.
Bobby W.

Chamberlain
P.s. posters would ssssssssssssoooooooooooooo rock!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Not the same guy. Sorry.

Hi,
Never written before, just been a voyeur up to now, but I've been thinking; how much do the opinions of those who

have read your work matter to you?

More than they should, I think. I really do care if you guys like this stuff. I'm doing it for ME, but I'm also doing it for YOU.

You obviously have a passion for the work that you do, and you've had to struggle to get your work recognized and published. Is the satisfaction for you in just getting the work out there, or is it the feedback that you get from people, good, bad and indifferent?

A little of both, actually. I think I'm prolific because I get a great deal of satisfaction just from getting the work out there. But I wouldn't be able to continue to do that if you kids didn't like the stuff. So the feedback is important too. As long as you realize that only 10% or less of the people reading this stuff are actually responding with feedback. At the end of the day, sales are the only feedback.

Now I'm guessing, but I would have thought that you would assume a kind of musician's view- that you make stuff you like and hope others like it too, or you would cry yourself to sleep at night from the adrenalin-fuelled-double-Y-chromosome rants that you must receive. But what about those who buy and never read?

What started this line of thought was that I recently got chatting to a guy I've never met before and it came up that we both liked comics (which is nice because it's fairly unusual to find round here these days). But as we talked it came out that while we bought similar comics, I buy them to read and he buys them, bags them and either adds them to his collection or sells them on at a profit without ever reading them.

EEK!

I couldn't quite get my head round the idea that he buys some very thought-provoking or at least damn good stories and then never turns a page, never gets beyond the front cover. I mean as a hobby it's fine, it's no different than say- collecting vintage bottles of wine and not drinking them. But I couldn't get the creators out of my head (please leave by the way- I need sleep without the zombie monkey dreams), the writer and artist put a lot of themselves and a lot of passion into the story only for it never to be read but sit behind a CGC approved DNA-proof force field or whatever. I realize (or at least hope) that practices like this are fairly rare but there must still be quite a few people who do this, who collect for the sake of collecting. Indeed when I said that my spare room is nearly full to bursting with comics, the guy couldn't understand why I wouldn't sell them all, "I read them" didn't quite cut it. I just got a response filled with price estimates and CGC gradings. Even comics I don't read or like very much any more I pull out and give to my nephews (hi Joe, Bill & Fred!) so they can get the pleasure out of reading them as I did when I was their age.

So, does that bother you as a writer, never to have your work read, or are you pleased with it, regardless of who reads it (or not)?

Just a thought.
Dale Phillips.

If the question is: would I continue to do the book if I knew that NO ONE was reading it and they were just bagging it and storing it of a later sale? Yeah, I think I would. I mean, I certainly don't like to hear that people aren't reading my work or looking at Charlie and Cliff's work, but I do the work because I like doing it, and it happens to pay the bills.

I would probably enjoy it less if I though the majority of the people weren't even reading it, but really, it's no different than an art

patron. I mean, it's someone paying you to make the art you would enjoy doing anyway, right?

Luckily, I think most people read these things so this is kind of a moot point.

Kirkman:

Just a quick note to say how bitchin' #19 was. One thing, though: during the fight scene, all the humans are standing as a front, so the zombies don't surround them, and all the zombies are coming from one place, which is in front of them, right? So I know it's just a comic book and all, but how did that one zom' manage to get behind Dexter? Just a silly question, but one that will keep me up nights if not answered.

They were slowly backing away from where they had started when the zombies attacked. They were moving backwards through the prison grounds, which are not strictly blocked out like a hallway. The zombie that attacked Dexter took a short cut to get to where they were on the prison grounds. It all makes sense if you look at it that way.

I was in my local shop last month, amped about the Romero flick, looking for zom' comix, and hadn't even heard about TWD, becuz I am ill-informed about everything. By luck I found the 3rd TPB, which was shamefully buried beneath a stack of Marvel Essentials. I also found, not buried beneath a stack, but on the shelf for all to see, Romero's Toetags, and an updated version of Deadworld. When I brought my comix up to Al the Comic Book Guy, he said, dollar signs flashing in his eyes, "You're into the horror stuff, huh?" I copped to having a zombie fetish. He said, "You and a bunch of other people. I sell a lot of these," and he pointed at the Vol. 3 TPB. Then he said he wasn't into zombies, that he preferred "real monsters." The poor fool! With that kind of attitude, he'll be one of the first to be infected, when the shit goes down.

Anyway, I thought Toetags and King Zombie were both humdrum but TWD, man...what can I say that hasn't already been said in that long-ass letter column of yours, which is also totally and completely bitchin', by the way. Every comic should have a letter column that runs as long as the comic itself. Do you get any mail from people who DON'T like TWD?

A sure fire way to get printed in this letters column is to send negative mail. I don't get much so I print every one I do get. Of course, now that I've said that... I'm going to get nothing but negative mail from here on out.

Now that I've gushed, babbled, AND asked two stupid questions, this fanboy will sign off, but not before plugging the Zombie News Network, at www.zombienews.blogspot.com. Thanks to all involved for putting out a fucking awesome comic book.

The
Right Reverend Potere O.
Occulto III

Man, a lot of URL plugs in this issue.

Dear Kirkman,
Issue 19... "Cry me a river"... holy shit, I laughed out loud at that one. Rick's becoming quite the psycho... that's neat. And that katana-wielding chick is definitely cool. A cool thing. Is Rick going to nail her? Ah, well, I guess we'll see...LAND OF THE DEAD... how... disappointing??? I'm not really sure how I feel about it yet. It was not as good as the wicked DAWN remake, that's for bloody sure. What did you think? You're into that zombie stuff, right? Here're some critiques on LAND... Hey, don't have the TUCKER character from the remake of DAWN be a lead zombie. It just distracts. Plus that guy's a bad Canadian actor. I'm Canadian so I can say that. And also don't have that other cheerleading zombie be an actress from a zillion commercials. Did you recognize that bouncy pony-tailed cheerleader zombie from the "Rolo-chocolate-cone" and "Peak Freans" ads? Stupid.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? Are these Canadian commercials? Who watches THOSE?

What did you think about the zombie's having...like..."feelings". Like when that gas-pumping zombie put that other flaming zombie out of its misery... was that weird? I thought so. I thought if Romero was going to make the zombies smarter, that would be cool and scary, but they're so evolved that they're just like regular people, except they eat skin. Ehn...not so scary. Leguizamo was basically the best thing in the movie. Oh, there's a movie called, The Ghouls, with a few actors that people would recognize, and it's about zombies... have you seen it? Don't. Anyway, I like YOUR zombies. They never change, they don't have feelings, or ever look up into the sky and give an painfully emotional, "Waahgghh..." Please keep up the GOOD work.

Now Charlie Adlard is a great artist, I think issue 19 was his best so far, but... now this is just a harmless question... are you going to switch up the artist again anytime soon? Don't hit me! Just asking...

That's up to Charlie. As far as I'm concerned, he can draw this book as long as he wants to.

AND, LOVE the little zombie facts you give, like how those armless, jawless zombies somehow make it so that tough-girl isn't attacked... those are just the little quirky things in your zombie universe that make it YOUR universe, and no one else's. Rathburn needs some praise. PRAISE RATHBURN. He sure can... gray tone. No, really, he's great too.

Thanks for the only comic I buy.
YOU GUYS KILL!
Stephen Lacombe

Rathburn is the man. He's also a great artist on his own as well. He just finished up Fantastic Four: Foes with me and is starting work on a new Image series that I'll be keeping under wraps for the time being. He keeps busy in-between toning sessions on this book.

Letter Hacks

It's gonna be hard to write a letter without sounding like a complete kiss-ass, but here goes...

Well, I've just put down issue 19 of TWD and I gotta say... damn fine work once again guys. This issue just doesn't let up.

I'm liking the new character introduced in this issue. By the time this goes to print, no doubt she's been fleshed out (and from what I've seen from Tony's future covers in Previews, gets involved in a BIG way) and I'm looking forward to reading that, but for now, hot damn she kicked all angles of zombie ass in this issue. Nice! The fact that Rick popped Dexter in the noodle amidst the chaos was a nice touch too. Sure, it was to save the group as a whole, but it should be interesting seeing how Rick adapts to such harsh actions (Charlie's last panel spoke a thousand words if you ask me - such is the power of his art).

Heh, I bought that page... what a GREAT image that was.

Being a lifelong fan of comics, I've floated from title to title like a funnybook vampire waiting for the next gem to leech off. I think the last title I followed so religiously was Augustyn and Ramos's Crimson, and that bad boy finished a loooong time ago. Then, after many months of reading a few titles that started strong but ultimately began to fall, I read some of the buzz for the Walking Dead. It just sounded like the kind of book I would enjoy. So I joined the club with Issue 7 and a shiny new first TPB.

Boy was I blown away.

And since then, I think the Walking Dead is the only comic I religiously look forward to in that nice bundle that I order online. In a sea of zombies ideas/stories/games/films... this book sails over all of them. Don't get me wrong... like many other folks, I love a nice slice of zombie action (why are so many people attracted to working with walking corpses? cant be the smell) when its done right - its just a shame that its done right on so few an occasion. I think its the character work that I love the most. Even if the character is despicable, their demise will have an impact. That sort of thing doesn't usually happen in comics. There's none of the 'Bang. you're dead. oh well, never mind' thought process's that normally happen. So thumbs up to (the self-confessed shut in) you yourself Kirkman. This is an ongoing piece of class.

Just because I spend most of my time at home... doesn't mean I'm a shut in. My house is just really cool. I've got everything I need right now. Oh, and it's frigging summer time, it's HOT outside... why would I want to go out in the heat?

Art wise - I don't think there's a better combination than the Moore/Adlard/Rathburn connection. Sure, I was one of those that, at a first glance at issue 7 said 'oh... the art has changed', but Adlard is fast becoming a force of nature when it comes to this book, colour me happy on that one! Speaking of colour, I don't think enough things are said about Cliff Rathburn's gray tones, and for a guy who brandishes a mean pencil in his own right, he sure knows how to splash the tones for maximum impact (Oh, and if anyone's reading this, be sure to pick up Rathburns 'Reaper' trade if you can. It's a quality piece of work).

Yes, the ART at least in Reaper is second to none.

Speaking of quality pieces of work, you may be pleased to know that reading this led me down a path to purchase two of your Brit trades and a few Invincible issues. Great stuff, and I recommend it all to my fellow comic book reading buddies regularly. But then again, I'm from the mindset that anyone who writes a book called Battle Pope can do no wrong anyway LOL.

Anyway, back to the shuffling dead...

Another thing I like about this book is the unexpected element of it all. I've never known a book to surprise me at least once from issue to issue (and its refreshing to see someone actually back up the 'no-one is safe' talk with some surprising and horrific deaths - kudos to Mr. Kirkman). This certainly is one book that no one can predict - and I think that's part of why it just keeps on growing like it has (and rightfully so, the day I hear this book has been cancelled, I think I'll eat my own face - and does anybody want that on their conscience?! Thought not).

Overall, consider me a lifelong Walking Dead reader (not literally of course, though after a heavy night out, I sometimes resemble one of your decaying ghouls the next morning).

I'm not going to be another of those dudes who asks if Rick's going to go back to find more survivors, or to give you my five cents on where I think the story should go. You know what you're doing, and for all intents and purposes, you guys can drive this wagon all the way over a cliff and back again if that's how you feel. This is one reader who is just happy to be along for the ride.

Until the dead start walking in my neighbourhood and I'm forced to fight them off with a shovel... Keep up the good work guys!

Vince Hunt
UK

p.s: I'm sure I got some shit on my lips from all that ass kissing, but f**k it, this is the first of no doubt a few letters ill send to the funkotron collective, so its best to get it out the way in one hit.

We enjoy a good ass kissing from time to time. So no harm done.

And that'll do it for this month. Man, it seems like these things are getting LONGER.

Thanks for reading folks. I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 22, here she is, isn't she grand?

If any of you folks live in Tacoma, Washington and you know where Comic Book Ink is (or have a phone book and know how to get to mapquest.com) come on out to my signing on October 22nd. You can find out more information by visiting www.comicbookink.com I'm sure there's a phone number on there somewhere if you've got some questions. Come on out!

Other than that, not really much to report this month. So I guess I'll just dive right into the letters. Sound good?

Good.

Dear Kirkman,

I wrote you a letter in another book about writers not relying too much on pictures to tell the story. Issue 20 had four pages with no words other than "HUMNGH," "GUH," "RUH," and "Wow." Yet, those pages were my favorite in the book. Oh, except Allen getting bit (finally!). Page #2 also established that even "dead" zombies can still be dangerous!

Did you guys realize that was Thomas' remains? I thought not.

Some questions and stuff:

1. Ok, so in the Extended Cut of Dawn of the Dead we discover that Peter had a brother that was a pro football player. So...?

Really? Hmmmmm.

2. In Zombie King #0, we learn that zombies have other urges. Will we see any cows in TWD?

No. Not any time soon.

3. How much did Land of the Dead kick ass?

A fair bit.

4. Did you forget to look for Simon Pegg too?

No, I knew where he was and I knew where to look. So I didn't miss it. Pretty cool stuff actually.

5. Really, no smart zombies?

Nah. Sorry.

Man, zombie books everywhere. Zombie King, Dead World, Shaun of the Dead, Zombie Tales, Dead Eyes Open, Living with Zombies, and others. Keep up the good work. I wish I had more to say about each issue, but they're just so solid. Oh, thanks for biting Allen. I've been wanting him gone since before Donna. After that, I was hoping Zombie Donna would get 'em. So thanks. Here's to someone eating Otis!

Later,
Chris Pitts

Man, you really didn't like Allen? Well, I'm sorry to say that I wouldn't count him out just yet.

Hiya, Kirkman,

So, Frank Cho totally owes you a debt of gratitude. Here you are, almost two years into your zombie epic, and there are still letters talking about the similarities between your opening and the opening sequence of 28 DAYS LATER.

Not that many now, thankfully.

Obviously, Cho wanted to dodge that bullet, sat down, and decided to figure out a way to open his own zombie tale with something that would not invite similar cries. And what do we get?

A zombie fucking a cow. Umm. Wow.

Hey, you can threaten us with aliens all you want, but I don't think you've ever thrown necrobustiality at us. Get with it!

I'll get right on that.

Loved the Bendis photo at the back of issue 20. What you need to do now is stick his grinning mug over the "I" in the Image logo. You can just say you wanted to follow DC's lead since they just updated their classic bullet...

Keep up the fantastic work!

-Ernie Cooper

Nobody wants to look at Bendis that much. Trust me.

Listen Kirkman,

Enough with the prison already lets get these people moving. Don't get me wrong I love The Walking Dead but lets see some more zombie action! By the way, are you gonna put a #0 issue just like you did with Invincible?

Danny Ardeljan

No plans for a #0 issue just yet but you never know. Now, as far as the prison goes... just keep reading. There's plenty more zombie action coming up.

Hi,

I just wanted to let you know about a problem with my Walking Dead #20 issues I received from Diamond this week. I usually don't look inside the books when I check the items in but your book is one of the few that I look forward to reading. When I read the issue I noticed that eight pages were printed twice along with another eight duplicate pages from the letters column. All of my books were printed this way. I called this into Diamond and found out that they do not have any more issues in stock but back ordered it for me. I am not sure if this is widespread but I wanted to let you know in case there were a lot of damages called in this week maybe you can get the printer to print some more. Or even worse if it is widespread and the fans catch it, you are aware of it ahead of time.

Thanks for the great comic

Steve Tafuni

This is a common printing mishap that happens a LOT on very small portions of the print runs on many books. It's happened to a lot of books over the years. Luckily, it's usually just a small portion of the print run (less than 100 copies).

OK--I think everyone needs to chill about killing Rick! Come on, he is the only anywhere near remotely trained for the stuff that's going on! Besides, having zombie hordes, a cheating wife and cheating -police partner that just happened to die at the hands of his son would wear anyone down! BTW, I think Rick was justified in taking that prisoner out---I'd have shot him in the head too!!! Anyway, loved the current Team-Up arch, esp. punisher shooting off the finger---too funny!!! Love the book and keep up the good work!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Sorry, I'm just NOT going to print this. It's just not RANDOM enough. Please try again next time.

Here it is Wednesday (okay it's Friday), and I have read all of today's comics. Now when I finished the issue #20's contents, I was not surprised to find a recurring theme in the letters column. All these readers are saving their favorite titles to read last in their weekly stacks of comics, like it's some way to delay the satisfaction of a good lay with an array of titles to serve as a bit of foreplay before the Walking Dead. I thought, "how pathetic," then I realized that I had saved my copy of the Walking Dead until last... (that's almost as pathetic as all those people whining about Hawkeye in Bendis's letter column.)

No, it's not even close. Although, I gotta admit, I read my favorite comics FIRST and then I usually end up with a bunch of books I eventually end up forgetting to read.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that upon reading the first three trades of the Walking Dead, borrowing them from a friend, I have resolved myself to catch up with this zombie epic, even though I don't consider myself a zombie fanatic. Actually, I am not surprised but am thrilled to hear of the impending Walking Dead hardback...(hope there is a Charlie sketch included in each, maybe some of your scripts) But since I am not a zombie enthusiast, I wondered why I like this series so much. I collect 20 titles or so a month and one thing is recurrent...it is just the same as taking a step back and looking at the variety of titles that I collect. Powers,

Daredevil, Runaways, Walking Dead, Young Avengers, Astonishing X-Men... a variety of things going on in each title. I just think that the world of superheroes needed a black, white, and gray Zombie-Human-Survivist-Horror-Epic to stir things up a bit. Just like Image did way back when they started and continue to do today. The variety and events that have impacts on future events is what keeps things going...I mean when one letter column starts referencing another in the comic book industry, we've hit something. Call it a high, call it a low...who knows? But the variety is what keeps my creative vision going and my ambition as a comic fan alive. If you killed Rick (which I don't see happening) things would go on. Tyreese is just as worthy to be the center of the book, as is any number of the other characters. That is the beauty of this book. Take them where you will...we will follow like the mindless hoard you command in the book.

Daniel Guy

P.S. Any chance that Bendis can convince you to take over Daredevil when he leaves? Maybe that suggestion I gave him that he should blackmail you into doing it will work. Think about it.

Bendis was going to hand me the baton, but I was off in the bathroom. It went to Brubaker by default... because he was on the panel with Brian. Sucks to be me.

Bobby Kirkman and family?

I just wanted to say your book is awesome! I came across something on the internet that I believe would make your book better (if possible). Go to www.eathufu.com for a tasty treat. It is human flavored tofu. Maybe you could have a zombie representative try to talk to Rick and tell them why they taste so good before or after the aliens land. You could even have the zombie describe the taste after you try this hufu. It would be pretty accurate.

Eric Baca

I loved you in the Hulk Movie. It's a shame you went nuts.

Holy crap dude,

Issue 20's letters page made me feel like I was experiencing DejaVu over and over again. So many of the same questions at once, that's just weird. Not only that but many fans stating the same things (even more than usual) like when they started reading, how they started reading. Just goes to show great minds think alike. (I guess ;P) I won't waste time by telling how great the book is (I've done that in two letters already :)) I think Darrick Patrick is in one of my Yahell groups, He's the guy who used all caps on his words. Anyway I was thinking (still) about the latest issue two days after reading it and was putting a list of actors together who might play the roles of the characters in a Movie or HBO mini-series. You should definitely go the Mini-series route if offered a script. Anyway on to some picks. I can't think who would be in all the roles as I'm not certain of ethnic backgrounds on persons like Glenn, I believe Lori is Native American. And some were just offed too quick. On to the List

RICK: Viggo Mortenson (He's got the rugged look down from Hidalgo and LOTR)

SHANE: Ben Affleck (And not cause I'd like to see him get shot twice for ruining Daredevil...well maybe...)

MORGAN: Morgan Freeman (I know he's a little old but the man can act, and make-up could take care of the rest.)

DUANE: ?

LORI: Iyari Limon (The girl who played KENNEDY in the last season of Buffy the Vampire Slayer.) you can see her here <http://www.restlessbtvs.com/trivia/episodes/season-7/710/>

CARL: ?

JIM: Liam Neeson.

ALLEN: Oliver Platt.

Donna: Eric's mom from that 70's show.

BEN & BILLY: ? kids are to hard to cast :P

GLENN: ? still not sure of his ethnic background Asian?

DALE: Michael Caine.

Carol: Rebbecca Romjin Stamos.

SOPHIA: ? Damn kids.

ANDREA & AMY: Lindsey Lohan. (They are both close enough in look and age that she could do both parts)

TYREESE: Ving Rhames.

JULIE: ?

CHRIS: Tobey Maguire.

OTIS: ?

HERSHEL: Michael Douglas.

MAGGIE: Alexa Vega.

BILLY: ?
LACEY: ?
ARNOLD: ?
RACHEL: ?
SUSIE: ?
PATRICIA: ?

AXEL: Hulk Hogan.

THOMAS: Anthony Hopkins.

ANDREW: Lil' Bow

DEXTER: Laurence Fishburn.

MICHONNE: Naomi Harris (from 28 days later)

Realistically, I doubt most of these actors would be available for a TV show. And I KNOW a normal TV budget couldn't afford them. I go with most if not all unknowns. It's more fun that way.

Best I can come up with, If they don't work just use Simon Pegg and a lot of Make-up for all the roles LOL, what's you're crack at them, or better yet who would other fans feel best fit the roles? On to some (Not so serious) questions.

1. Can we have Aliens before issue 75?

That would ruin the surprise.

2. Will your Zombies be buggering any Cows soon? (Do you know where I get this Question from?)

Fuck Frank Cho.

3. How about a Shaun, Liz, ED, WD Crossover?

Liz?

4. Will there be a copy of the "ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE" in the prison Library?

We can only hope.

5. And a Question you have NEVER been asked, WILL the Zombies stay stupid?

Yeah.

LOL...Hey, I was Just Kidding put murdering artist back on their chains... ACK!

Matt McIntyre (Scots Rule)

Oh, you were joking. Sorry.

I liked the thought that the survivors are actually doing jobs, like in normal life!!!! Picked up the Invincible #0 and the trade #1 and damn you they were great!!!!!! BTW, you read Zombie King yet? A cow!!!!!! That was ssssssssssoooooooooooooo wrong!!!!!! Thanks for the great books!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I think this went to the wrong email. Or better yet, did you send this email to all three books mentioned here?

Dear Robert Kirkman,

When I decided to write this letter, I knew I didn't want it to be one of those long, droning, boring letters full of endless ass-kissing and me telling you what I think you should do with your own story... So I think I've boiled it down to what I really want to tell you.

Thank you.

I really enjoy reading your book. It is my favorite title to read by far. I've been passing the trades around to anyone who will take the time to look at them... and everyone is immediately sucked into your world... They immediately get the hunger for more... So before I blabber on and on... Thank you. On behalf of my roommates and myself... Thank you.

Mike Craft
Shawnee, OK

Great, short and to the point. Thanks. Nice job. Oh, wait...

Addendum: I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of our art with you... Since you've been so kind and gracious to share yours with us. My friend Byron and I make music under the name 'Apologist' ...I suggested that we call ourselves The Walking Dead... But he wasn't as hot on that idea as I was... You could check out our website for some of our music... (<http://www.freewebs.com/apologist>) More than one song is about zombies actually... So maybe if you don't appreciate the music there's a good story to be had on at least two of the songs... Keeping kicking ass on the comic book by the way... I have absolutely no complaints with what you're doing.

Man, you were doing so well before the addendum. No WAY am I going to listen to your music NOW.

Hey guys,
First off, want to do the usual congrats for making a great fuckin' book. I must admit I was very sad to see Tony go as the main artist, as his artwork was one of the main reasons I got into this, but Charlie and Cliff are still keeping me happy. Just finished issue 20 and it's still going strong. But on to business, a friend and I found a small continuity error in issue 19. (I guess slight spoilers ahead if you haven't read 19) In it we are introduced to Michonne, the samurai sword carrying badass, and her two lovely dates (both zombies). As a condition to being let into the prison, she has to kill both of her zombie friends, which she does in a single chop. Now on the cover and frames previous they are shown without lower jaws and arms. After they are decapitated and on the ground, THEY HAVE ARMS AGAIN! This is shown in two frames. Not a very big deal, but it makes me feel smart to point out the only mistake in like 20 issues, so back off. But anyways, love the comic, keep up the good work, and welcome to the fun Rus.

-Nick Driever

Zombies grow arms when you cut their heads off. How do you think we get four-armed zombies? Stupid.

Hey Man,

Let me start off by saying that "The Walking Dead" is an amazing comic, definitely the highlight

of the current comics offerings. I'd like to ask you a couple of questions, if you don't mind. Firstly, I know you've said that you don't want to water down the universe by doing spin-offs and the like, but what I'd really like to see is a Walking Dead sketchbook featuring sketches by both Moore and Adlard. Surely it wouldn't take that much work as I'm sure there is already a wealth of stuff that's never been published. It would be a nice little extra to the main title and think of the extra money! ;) Also, I don't know why you get letters about Adlard's art, saying they preferred it before he joined, but to be honest I think he is a better artist than Moore. I think the book as a whole has improved since the start of the second arc. The art has got better and so has the writing. Kudos to you. Have you seen "Beyond Reanimator?" What did you think? Heh, and you certainly need more of the shower scenes! ;)

Never seen beyond reanimator.

My big request however - I am a third year BA (hons) Media Production student at Cumbria Institute of the Arts in Carlisle, England, and for one of my two major projects in my final year I have to submit a 5000 word report on a relevant topic of my choice. I have chosen to write about Comic book movies and why they are often a failure in the eyes of comic book fans and the creators of such titles. What I would like to do, if you would be so kind as to give me a few minutes of your time, is for you to write the report for me! HAHA Only joking! Seriously, if it is possible could I possibly conduct a quick interview with you via email asking you on your opinions of a few different comic films. I understand you are a very busy man what with your comics writing and the script for the Invincible film that I hear you're writing, but if this would be possible I would be very appreciative and grateful.

Thank you for your time,
Mike Swain

Sure, send me the questions. You guys see what I have to put up with? Everyone wants a piece!

I saw the movie the Undead. That movie SUCKED!! I've seen better acting in porno movies. What was the deal with "Hillbilly Jim" acting like this was the Matrix. Doing flips and firing guns in slow motion. And the aliens, I don't even know what to say about that. It was so terrible.

Long live the Walking Dead!!!!

Man, I thought Undead was a GREAT movie. I mean, if you're looking for a serious movie--it's not for you, but if you're looking for something FUN and CRAZY you can't go wrong. I think Undead is SOLID GOLD, actually. I loved it.

Hey Walking Dead crew,
Man do I love this comic. After every new issue, I'm yearning for the next. There are so many directions and possibilities you can use. Its only on issue 21 and it feels like its just at the beginning. Please at least take it to 300 issues. On to some questions:

Any chance of an issue 0 like you did with Invincible. I'd really like to see the beginning of the infestation, maybe something about Atlanta. You should really get Tony Moore to come back for it. What's he been up to? That Fear Agent looks kind of cool.

Well, you kinda already answered your question, part of it at least. Tony's been off working on Fear Agent. There are no plans at this point to do a zero issue but you never know when plans can change.

I know people keep asking about a live action Walking Dead movie or tv show. It definitely should be an HBO original series. I'm going to try to write to someone at HBO and get some other fans to do the same. (So get to it people) I would live to see it in black and white. Nothing is scarier than black blood pouring out of the body. If the chance comes up to do so, do not let them change a thing. I'd rather not see it if you don't have creative control. Its perfect the way it is. No new characters, no getting rid of characters, no plot changes. TWD has more drama and emotion than anything on TV.

If The Walking Dead gets transferred to any other medium, TV or film... there are going to be changes. There would have to be. Don't forget, the possibility is there for changes to make it BETTER.

Any chance you and the Funkotron crew will come to Wizard World Boston?

Thanks for a great comic
Billy McEnery

No plans to be at Boston. Sorry.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I'm about to write something you have probably never read before, especially concerning "The Walking Dead." (Yes, I've wrote to comics before, I wrote to Marvel's "Transformers" twice and "X-Men" twice, all four letters never got published, though)

I HATE horror movies. Hate them. I have a very weak stomach, so all that blood and gore just sickens me. I try to tell myself that is not real but it doesn't make any difference. I still get nauseated when I watch them. If I am interested in a movie, I have to wait for it to come to Sci-Fi Network so that I can watch the edited movie, and even then there are still some scenes that sicken me. My problem with zombie movies has been what you summed up in your prologue, that I'm always asking "What happened to..." after the movie. To me, it wasn't worth all the gore to just be left wondering why at the end of the movie.

Sissy.

Then I heard about your comic. The first ever mention of it was in the first letter page of "Marvel Team-Up" when everyone was saying how wonderful issue one was (which it was, by the way) and how "The Walking Dead" was their

favorite comic. That was high praise coming from such accomplished writers. Then I saw some places online that kept talking about how this was a great book and should be everyone's "Must Read" list. Even with all this praise, I was still skeptical. I mean, I HATE horror movies, how could I enjoy a "Horror Comic?" So I finally decided what the hell and picked up the first trade.

I couldn't put it down. I reread it three times. I was just fascinated by how the book focused on character development, not zombie mayhem. I immediately went out and picked up the second trade and pre-ordered the third. Luckily, one of my local comic shops happened to have issues 13-16 (the current issue at the time), so I picked them up and have since added "The Walking Dead" to my pull list. This comic is the best comic on the market

right now, and I'm glad I'm finally on board to read it each and every month.

Okay, I take back the "sissy" remark.

I just finished issue 20 and I'm amazed how the story just keeps me guessing every month. Just when I think that I know what is coming, you throw me a curve instead of that fastball and just leave me dumbfounded at the plate. Enough with the cliffhangers, okay? Don't you think you have tortured us poor readers (not to mention your poor characters) enough? As 20 draws to a close we have Allen being bitten and Tyreese and Dale finding a generator. Will Allen survive? Will the generator work? Tune in next month, same Bat Time, same Bat Channel.

I have a few questions/suggestions:

1. I've been thinking about Chris Pitts statement that Tyreese was bitten and have come to the conclusion that he wasn't. I would think that since he's been back, Carol and he have had sex. As panicky as she seems, I would think that if anything about him was different she would have drawn attention to it. Besides, when he returned in issue 17 he had his shirt off and there were no bite marks.

2. I think Allen will survive. His bite seems bad, but not life threatening. Amy had her neck bitten, Donna had her face bitten off, and Hershel's kids all had their necks bitten. Jim's bite was not life threatening, however, it was a huge chunk of skin taken off. I think that Jim's wound could have been treated and he died (if he died) of bacterial infection due to exposure. I think that Allen will want to die, but he won't. The group will find some antibiotics at the prison, treat his wound with them, and he will survive, which will make him more depressed (He has had a death wish since Donna's death).

3. I have come to the conclusion that you are a Minnesota Vikings fan. You see, in the early 90's they made a trade with the Dallas Cowboys where they got Hershel Walker and the Cowboys got the draft pick that they used to draft Emmitt Smith. Either that, or a guy named Hershel used to beat the shit out of you at school. Why esle would you create a character named Hershel just to torture him so? I mean, the man's family (except for two kids) have been wiped out in the most horrific ways. I'm pretty sure his last son will be killed soon and Maggie is going to get pregnant by Glenn, just to torture him more and make you feel better.

I only know one guy named Hershel, and he's a nice guy. Hershel in the book is just an unlucky dude... to say the LEAST.

4. You have hinted that contact with either the military or government is coming soon. I'm hoping when this happens, they will have an explanation for what caused this plague. I know that you have stated that you think by revealing what caused people to turn into zombies, it will somehow cheapen the book. I disagree. I think it would satisfy a lot of fans curiosity. I propose that you put it to a vote. Ask your readers to vote on whether or not they want the cause revealed. I assume that there are many who feel the way I do and would vote for it. Just consider it. It's not like if you don't reveal the cause I'm going to stop reading the book. I'll only stop reading when Lori's baby turns out to be some Shane/Zombie/Alien mixture.

I'm not going to be putting it to a vote any time soon. I have no plans to ever reveal the origin of the zombies.

Again, I can't say enough how much I love this book. I look forward to the twists and turns every month. Keep up the good writing and you will have a faithful reader until the end of this book (which I hope isn't anytime soon).

Sincerely,
James E. Ragan

No plans to end the book for a good long time. I promise.

Mr. Kirkman,

Just read the latest issue of WD-20. Loved it. It's the kind of book that just makes you keep coming back for more. This book reminds me of film director Quentin Tarantino and Garth Ennis' comic series PREACHER. Why do you ask? Well, let me tell you:

1) Terrific dialogue. All three of you have a pretty good ear for dialogues. Although, I have to admit that you haven't reached Mr. Ennis' flair and use of creative cussing yet, but you're getting there.

I'll try to work in more creative cussing as the book goes on.

2) Shock value. Both Mr. Tarantino and Ennis know how to shock people and milk it for all it's worth. People read PREACHER just to see how far Mr. Ennis and Dillon would go. You, Mr.Kirkman, have "Cliffhanger" endings. You build up the characters in the story, make us care about them, and leave their fate in dire situations to be continued in the next issue. Which, I'm sure, leaves us readers cursing in frustration and suffering from sexual impotence until 30 days later the new issue of WD comes in. (Yeah - WD is a great way to get laid! Women just love flesh-eating zombies-just kidding.)

Did you just say... "sexual impotence?" I mean--REALLY? If the book is causing THAT problem I WANT you to quit, sales be DAMNED!

I do have to say that you lucked out with Mr. Adlard. I remember his work from The X-FILES. Damn, those were the good ol' days, eh Mr. Adlard? I do hope he's here to stay until WD-75.

Personally, I hope he stays on AFTER issue 75.

I do wonder if you're planning to address the issue of what caused the virus that turns people into zombies? My theory is, it's an airborne virus that turns dead tissues into living dead tissues. As being bitten by zombies is not the only way to turn into a zombie as you have indicated several issues ago. Which makes the title WD rather appropriate. You can't cure the disease unless you know the cause, only treat them as they may say in Control for Disease Centre.

Do you plan on a second volume of WD after number 75? I know that you have indicated before in your letter columns that you'd like WD to be around

an early bird?
or
forever.
Being realistic, we both
know the odds are against WD from being around
forever. Can you imagine the odds of Dave Sim doing 300 issues of CEREBUS and actually achieving it? What if he had a heart attack, or been in a crippling car accident, or a debilitating illness? To beat those odds and reach the goal that took Mr. Sim over 27 years to reach is amazing, but not everyone can do it.

Mr. Larsen might be able to do 300 issues of SAVAGE DRAGON, if he'd just get back to doing the book monthly since he's 29 issues short of the half-way mark. You, Mr. Kirkman, have an even longer way to go, besides nothing lasts forever. The readers are a fickle audience, we can get bored of a series and move on to a new one, or get eaten by zombies before the next issue of WD.

Well, I'd just be happy to make it to 100. That said, I think I'm younger than both Larsen and Sim were when they started their books. Well, Larsen at least, Sim was probably pretty young. Anyway, I'm going to go as long as I can with this. And I think Adlard is on board for the duration, at least for the foreseeable future. So we'll see how long the thing goes. With sales what they are now, I can say for pretty much certain that we'll make it to issue 50 unless things take a DRASTIC turn. To this day, though, sales still go UP with every issue.

Good luck anyway, on reaching WD-75. I hope to be around that long to see you and Mr. Adlard reach that goal. It might be interesting to see another vantage point-of-view of WD. Say either from a zombie POV or what's life like in Europe, Africa, and so on. So far we've only know what's like in America (but not Canada!).

See ya around, and keep up with the good work.

Yours sincerely,
Tom Fitzpatrick

P.S. Just love the letter column. There's so few around anymore. So that's is what BENDIS looks like with hair. Jeez, does he ever look ugly?!? No wonder he's bald. Nice way of getting revenge. ;-)

Well, I hear Brian has something planned that's going to be pretty bad. I may have opened Pandora's box here. I'm pretty sure I'm going to live to regret printing that picture.

Dear Funk Gang,

Your comic sucks and I hate you. (Just kidding)

I wanted to share some quick praises, observations, and zombie thoughts.

Issue #19 had a really great and creative cover. I was glad to see a sword and the nice "zombie control" devices that were utilized. I often thought to myself long ago "If I were ever in a zombie ruled world, I would definitely have a sword on me. In case I run out of ammo, this would do the trick". I would probably carry a European Falchion sword instead of a Samurai sword though... Issue#20 was really nice, especially the opening scenes showing the going's on of zombies. There was some nice comic, if not provocative observations by studying their movements and reactions. Plus it was great to get away from the human characters for a moment.

Speaking of zombie observations, I wanted respond to your comments regarding my last letter. I was the one who brought rigormortis and how it would constrict the muscles, causing problems for zombie movement. You responded by saying, and I quote "...you can't pick or choose what's realistic and what's not...and "... it's all throw out the window..". Oh really? Hmm....let's see what you have chosen for what zombies can and cannot do....

1. Anyone who dies turns into a zombie.
 2. Anyone who is bitten by a zombie dies, then turns into a zombie (a la Romero)
 3. Zombies attack the living and want to bite and/or devour them (a la everybody)
 4. Zombies apparently attack animals, like deer and horses (a la twisted Kirkman)
 5. Zombies are slow moving and slow witted (Romero and Kirkman)
 6. Zombies can recognize humans by smell
 7. Zombies can recognize humans talking or making noises (according to issue 19).
 8. Zombies can see and hear and smell
- I may have missed a few, but here is my point. We all pick and choose in fantasy. What we want a zombie to do in a movie, comic book, or whatever is up to us. However, if zombies could really become reality and the dead could come back to life, nature will pick and choose. Maybe the dead can come alive, but would be unable to walk, or make noises. Maybe they would decay and crumble apart while attempting to walk. So once again I say, "zombies can't happen", but I guess in the fantasy world we could even make them sprout wings and fly.

One last point here. It is interesting that if a person is brain dead, their body can go on living for at least a short period of time. If their heart stops, then the body dies almost immediately (then rigormortis sets in and then decay). Okay its question time:

In one of the early issues, Rick and Glenn proved to us in

Atlanta that you can trick a zombie's sense of smell and make them think you are a zombie. Rick and Glenn were talking up a storm though, and the zombies apparently did not notice. In issue #19, we see the new girl reacting with a vocal grunt to a situation and a zombie nearby reacts to it. So can your zombies recognize human voices or not?

Rick and Glenn were covered in goo. Whether it was sense of smell or not that masked their presence really well in Atlanta. It could have been the fact that they were covered in goo that could have looked like wounds therefore making the zombies THINK they were zombies. Michonne moved around freely with her two zombie companions. Again, this may be because they masked her smell and may not be. But when the zombie reacted to her, it's not clear if it was going to attack or not, Michonne killed it before it had the chance. Clearly there's a wide range of things that would get the attention of a zombie. I should also note that it doesn't have to be the same with all zombies. Not all people react the same way to things and not all zombies would either.

Okay, Robert. Now for some really pointless questions:

1. Are you a night owl

Early bird I suppose. I get up at a decent our far more often than I stay up late... but I do stay up late and work on occasion.

2. Have you seen the 1980's Italian zombie flick called "Gates of Hell"? If not, you should check it out. Very strange premise: Vampire-like creatures can turn you into zombies if you look at them. The way humans turn into zombies in this picture is absolutely horrific. I wont ruin it here if you want to see for yourself what happens to them. I actually saw this in the theater.

Never seen it--but I will NOW.

Okay this is my last thoughts, but mainly to the artists. I want to see variety with the zombies. No more bald, jean wearing zombies for awhile. Here are some suggestions:

1. Costumed zombies (give us a Romero clown or something)
2. Cowboy zombies (we're in Georgia correct? Surely some ranchers with cowboy hats are roaming around)
3. Zombie kids
4. Women zombies
5. Fat zombies

'Til the next (rigormortis- free) zombie attack,
Tracy Kent

While I will admit, there have been a fair share of bald shirtless zombies, there have been others. Plenty of others. Look at the opening scene of issue 20. You'll see women and children zombies. That said, we'll see if Charlie can't do some more unique zombies. Although, football player and clown zombies in the Romero flicks always bugged me.

Greetings Mr. Kirkman,

I read in a newspaper recently that TWD had been picked up by HBO to develop as a series? Any truth to that? If so, congrats are truly in order, and if handled as well as the other HBO shows, it is sure to be a hit. If not, well, I was hopeful and duped, but what a great idea.

I'd like to know what newspaper reported THAT. I mean, I'd really like for the comic to be picked up by HBO but I'm telling you, as the guy who would know--it HASN'T been.

As a long-time zombie-film aficionado, I must say your book almost out-does them all; much better than most zombie films, even some considered "classics"; don't get me wrong, I love even the worst zombie exploitation flick out there passionately, but I would say your book is way up there with the original Dawn of the Dead, and perhaps even better than Fulci's Zombie. It definitely beats uncle George's latest opus, which was unfortunately rather disappointing. Time to move on.

Been with you since issue #1, and I certainly don't plan on stopping. Keep up the mesmerizing work, it's really now up to you to show the world how it's done.

Sincere regards,

M. Roy

PS. any TWD merch on the way? Just curious.

We have plans to do SOME merchandise--exactly WHAT is still be decided. Of course, you'll hear it here first.

Dear Letter Hacks:

Sorry, long time, no write. No excuse, either.

Even if it isn't explained HOW zombies came to be in Walking Dead, there seem to still exist rules. I've given it a lot of thought and tried to see where it may differ from other zombie stuff, including the Romero zombie rules it APPEARS to be predicated upon. Let me know if I'm just flat-out wrong about any of it:

- 1) If you die, you become a zombie.
- 2) If you are bitten, you die faster. It makes you sick.
- 3) If you act fast enough, you might be able to prevent getting sick from a zombie bite. You need to keep it from spreading through your blood stream so the only answer is amputation and fast.

This one is yet to be confirmed.

- 4) The only way to stop a zombie is by destroying its brain.
- 5) Zombies decay at different rates due to outside factors such as weather, state of the body at time of death and possibly, whether or not they eat.

The eating thing is speculation. It has yet to be revealed if they get any benefit from eating.

- 6) Zombies can smell death and decay and ignore it.

Suspected, but not yet proven.

- 7) Zombies are attracted to motion.
- 8) Zombies bite and eat a bit but in general have no interest in digesting or eating all of their meal.

I think it's been shown that they usually eat until something is gone or they've been interrupted.

- 9) Different zombies have different patterns. Some stay still and wait for something to come by. Some roam out on their own. Most congregate together.
- 10) They move slowly.

The rest of these seem fine.

We can also guess at some things that the zombies in Walking Dead may do:

- 1)
They will eat animals as well as people, but the animals do not seem to become zombies.
2) They may vaguely recall what they did during life and emulate it. Congregating in cities, maybe more.
3) Their blood, at least in small quantities, does not seem to be a contagion, as our heroes have fought them hand-to-hand many times and would likely have gotten zombie blood in their eyes or in their mouth or in their cuts.

You can take a shower without water getting in your eyes and mouth. I don't think any of the characters have ingested zombie blood yet. I would imagine that would make them pretty sick.

Questions about the Walking Dead zombies.

- 1) Do they need to eat to keep going?
2) Can they communicate at all?
3) Do they want just flesh or brains?

While I far prefer the attention paid to our regular characters, I'd love to see the zombies' nature examined in further depth down the road. One thing almost all zombie films approach at some point is the characters trying to learn if there is a cure. There might not be, but with all the time they have to kill, you have to figure they'd think about it A LOT.

Keep up the great work. This is a great title.
Chris Piers

I still maintain that realistically finding a "cure" would be at the bottom of these character's "to do" lists. Staying safe and staying alive is more important than trying to figure out a way to stop the spread of zombie whatever. Also, they don't have equipment or know how to do this. They may eventually run into someone who does, though....

Mr. Kirkman,

Well, it's been many a year since last I wrote a letter to a comic series. I grew up on comics and the late eighties/early nineties was truly a fun time to be a young letterhack and it was my pleasure to contribute to letter pages with the likes of Uncle Elvis, Charlie Novinskie, Mark Lucas and Malcolm Bourn. But like everything else, it seemed that the various titles became uninterested in actual opinion pieces and instead wanted mindless praise for half-assed work. This trend proved to be the end of my letterhacking days.

Then I came across THE WALKING DEAD thanks to Wood, a friend a fellow zombie fan. Aside from the obvious of it being a damn good zombie story, the thing that drew me in even more was your letters page. Unfortunately, it seems a strong letters section for comics as a whole has become a thing of that past, which makes the few titles such as yours stand out all the more.

Having made it to the San Diego Comic Con this year I was disappointed to not have met you personally, but at least this has given me reason to write, and for that I should thank you as well.

Sincerely,
Marson Fedrick

I'm sorry if you missed me at Comic-Con this year. I was being pulled in all kinds of different directions and didn't get to spend nearly as much time at my own booth as I would have liked. I should be there again next year. Hopefully I'll be there to meet you. Now, if you just didn't find the time to get over to my booth... fuck you, buddy. Fuck you.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Never before in my life did I ever think that I would love reading comic books. I always thought that comics were nerdy and all about super heroes. But when my friend introduced me to your comic The Walking Dead, I completely fell in love with it. It is really hard for me to put the darn thing down. Anything can happen to anyone of the characters, no one is safe. That is what I love about it. I can't tell you how many times I was socked when I turned the page. I love it!! You should really think about putting out some kind of merchandise, like... maybe mini posters, t-shirts, playing cards. Anything would be wonderful!!

Also is there any chance that you will have some kind of singing here in Lexington, I would love to have you sign one of my Walking Dead comics.

Thanks,
L. Williams

AA

I've done two signings in Lexington so far, both at A+ Collectables on Southland Drive. (this is Lexington, KY we're talking about, folks). I'm sure I'll be doing another sometime soon. Possibly at one of the other stores in Lexington.

I've never written to a comic book before, but Paul Shinn's letter in #20 (excellent issue, by the way--poor old Allan!) inspired me. The Littlest Hobo is a television show in which a dog travels around the country, stopping in one place every episode, usually to befriend some disabled kid and help him solve some local crime involving dastardly property developers or the like.

Unlike Lassie or Skippy the Bush Kangaroo however, Hobo was characterized by a tendency towards being utterly bloody depressing because the dog would bugger off during the climax of the episode, usually while no one was looking, and the little disabled kid would be all "where's my new friend? where did he go?" before finally realizing that he was once again alone in the world. Cue credits.

It was a Canadian show, but it also got shown a lot in Britain during the 1980's (as I recall, it was the only kids' show on Sunday mornings at the time) and so there's a whole bunch of twentysomething Brits who've been emotionally scarred by that malicious hound.

Kelvin Green

Man, I'm going to have to kick God in the nuts one day for saddling my with Lassie and Benji and keeping me from the littlest hobo by having me be born here. Granted, he's done plenty of other good for me... but I can't let that Hobo thing go. It sounds friggin' hilarious. And who knew Canada had their own shows?! Wow.

Hey Mr. Kirkman and crew. I'm a fan, and TWD kicks my sorry little ass. The thought of zombies taking over the Earth pops into my head every day, and when I look about my dirt-ridden town and all

the people who shamble about so much like the undead that they might as well be them, I sigh and read some back issues. Anyways, fantasies aside, I'm writing because I've got some beef with your readers...

Seems everyone's hating on Rick lately. Not everyone, but quite a few uneducated seem to just want you to kill him and do it quickly. That's so freaking stupid. I mean, kill him if you want, that's fine, but their reasons are ridiculous. Saying shit like he's become too bossy or that he's snapped and gone crazy and what have you, it seems these guys aren't actually reading your comic. They don't understand that even when humanity has failed, people are still human. To explain, let's take a look at why Rick is collapsing...

He wakes up, has no idea what's going on, and zombies are trying to eat him. Everyone else not in a coma knew about the zombies and slowly came to grips with it, where Rick's just thrown into it. Also, he has no clue where his family is and his only concern being finding them, brother never gets a chance to deal with all that. That's huge. Anyone of your snot-nosed pimply readers would break in two and throw themselves to the mercy of the zombies put into that situation. Rick's harder than Hell for dealing with that the way he did. Then, when he does find his family...

Everything seems fine, until Rick discovers his best friend has been hoping that Rick was gone forever so he could score with his wife, which he already did. Then his son kills Shane, and Lori's pregnant. On top of that, Rick gets nominated and elected to be leader of the little group, a position I doubt he really wants but knows not to turn it down because everyone is relying on him and he knows that he would be the best man for the job and that if he didn't take it he would be failing all those that have come to trust him. That's fucking heavy as well. And he still hasn't come to grips with the world properly yet.

Then every attempt at a better life gets someone or someones killed. Rick takes responsibility. This is fucking ridiculous. I feel so bad for this guy, he's been just eating everyone's shit this entire time. So, when Rick finds a fucked up murderer attempting to off most everyone in the group, he goes ballistic. He gets all that aggression out on this psycho and your readers berate him for it. He knows he's losing his mind, so he ups his aggression and assertiveness in an attempt to control it and this is the outcome. Anyone would react the same, if not worse. And when some misguided asshole threatens to force everyone out of safety, Rick thinks of everyone else and shoots the man. Cold, but necessary. He's not irrational or a danger to the group, he's just doing the God damned best he can for everyone, and fuck those readers who want him dead for it. The laws of man definitely become suspended when the system of man fails. But, if you've been planning on killing him, do it for the right reasons, not because some 14-year-old thinks Rick's not playing fair.

Anyways, thanks for listening to my rant. I just hope you print this and set some of the misguided straight. But aside from all that, you fuckers kick ass. Beautifully done comic here, and my favorite on the market by far. Can I come work for you?

Never stop.

Love,
Jeff Allen

Aside from slightly insulting some of the fine readers of this comic, I've got to say you've hit the nail on the head. That's a pretty fair explanation of why Rick has been acting like he's acting. Bravo and thanks for writing.

Kirkman you Bastard!

After picking up volume 1 of the trade back in October of 2004, then followed by volumes 2 and 3, I am now on board with the monthly issues with Issue #19. Congrats, I'm addicted. And now I need my monthly fix. I can't hold out until volume 4 of the trade gets published. Bastard.

I don't really pick up many comics. At present I purchase Amazing Spider-man, Fantastic Four, Daredevil, and the Walking Dead. By far, your book is my favorite, and the best of the four. Followed by Daredevil. The Walking Dead is so well done, that it's a pure joy to sit down and read it. Since my

first monthly issue was #19, I hand no clue about those crazy letter pages. How come some publishers can't even included a letter page in their titles, and this title runs so many pages. Between the story, and the letter pages, this title is well worth the monthly price.

I just finished issue #20. Power Generator! What good is that? They'll need oil, or some sort of fossil fuel to get any electricity out of it. If there is some oil still in it, it will eventually run out. Then what? Back to the same problem. Ha! Here is a suggestion on how they can solve their long-term energy problem since we are under the assumption that nobody is delivering gas to them. They need to get some sort of portable power. Get a Yellow Pages. Locate the nearest Hardware store that has portable batteries with built in inverters and AC outlets on them. Probably at the same stop, they'll have Solar Panels that connect to those portable batteries in order to charge and recharge them. Once the place is located, get Rick and a few others to raid it and get the material to the prison. It won't solve all their problems, but it can solve a few things.

Anyway, keep up the good. Bastard. I'll be there supporting this title, as long as you keep surprising the reader.

AA

Thanks for the letter, AA. We'll see where things go with this power generator. Our crew seems to have a lot to deal with before they even get back to figuring out how to turn that thing on.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

My way to becoming a reader of The Walking Dead was pretty long and curvy. I guess it all started with Jubilee (as many things in my life did). About a year ago, when I learned that a Jubilee comic was about to be published in September, my first natural reaction was to scream from joy. The second reaction was to write to a comic-based web-group I used to hang around and ask "Is this Kirkman guy good?" The answers I got were pretty favorable, so I started to think that me and the little mutant firecracker finally got lucky.

Which proved to be true, by the way - after the series was finished, I considered it to have been lacking only two things - a better artist and a longer story. Some time had passed,

before I heard about a comic title that sounded kind of strange. So once again I went and asked, “What’s The Walking Dead about and who’s the writer?”

“It’s a great story about people facing an unusual situation, namely zombies”, I heard. “And the writer’s Robert Kirkman”.

That’s how I finally became the proud possessor of The Walking Dead #17. And my respect to the man that can write with such a great style both about zombies and killers and about a sharp-tongued mutant sparkcaster grew even greater.

To put it shortly - You’re the man.

Regards,
Daniil Iver a. k. a. Salamander

Cool to hear from you. I’m always happy to hear how people came to read this book. It’s pretty odd that you came in from JUBILEE but that’s fine. You got here and that’s what’s important. I got a lot of crap for taking that book on. I mean, I’m not a teenage girl and that book wasn’t exactly aimed at my usual demographic. I’ve got to say, though, I had a blast writing that book. Mostly because of Cory Sedlmeier the editor, who after a while pretty much let me run wild with the thing. I recommend the book to anyone who’s liked any of my stuff. I think it ended up being a cool little series.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

First of all, I hate zombie movies.

I just wanted to get that out of the way. I don’t watch zombie movies or horror movies in general, they’re just not my thing, y’ know? And because of that I successfully resisted The Walking Dead for a really long time.

But, I consider myself a smart comics fan, and as the praise for TWD kept growing and getting louder, it became harder to ignore. I listened to a comic shop owner talk for an hour about TWD and Invincible, and I read the fourtrail.com every week, and Randy Lander just kept writing about how great the book is too. And couple all the great praise I’ve heard with the fact that I’m a 28 year old schoolteacher that has the summer off, and well I had the time to try something new. So, I broke down and bought the first trade.

Fast-forward a month. I now have all 3 trades and issues #19 and # 20. I’ve just read volume 2 and volume 3 at once, in a frenzy, like I was a zombie that just found a fresh body in the grass. I hope you’re satisfied, and proud of yourself, because TWD might be the best book in comics today. And I couldn’t have found TWD at a better time, because there’s not a lot at the Big Two that has me excited right now,,, except for Runaways and everything that Ed Brubaker writes.

Bah--Brubaker’s a hack!

What do I like about The Walking Dead? Well, how about great pencils by Charlie Adlard, great covers by Tony Moore, and the awesome Cliff Rathburn greytone. Please don’t ever switch to color. The black and white suits the book perfectly, and really differentiates it from the other books out there. (BTW, another great book that uses greytone from Image is Small Gods, check that out.) And the writing on TWD is just superb. You’re doing a great job. There is just such an aura of danger and menace that just permeates the book, at any second you know something awful could happen. And that’s a good thing. TWD is never boring or slow paced. In fact, I don’t think I’ve ever read a comic book with such a sense of urgency before, the only thing else that I’ve found to be such a gripping read was Bendis’ Daredevil and Brubaker’s Sleeper. So keep the great characterization and the great twists coming, and I’m going to keep reading.

And I still hate zombie movies.

-Nick Rini
Queens, NY

PS - I love the long letter columns too. That way you can print lots of letters... “hint hint”

Yeah, yeah... you’ve been printed. Happy now? And thanks for the kind words.

Robert Kirkman,
“Lovin’ every minute of it (LOVIN’), Lovin’ every minute of it (LOVIN’)”
The slow yet steady turn of Rick is probably what I think is the greatest thing missing from most mainstream literature. I believe it is your intent to, by the time it is all said and done, make Rick the “bad guy”. And if so, I love it. If not, do it anyway and claim that was your idea all along.

I love how there is no clear cut right or wrong, hero or villian, and how every decision good or bad is simply about survival. When it comes time for someone to “be the hero” or “the villian” it will be that more poignant because there will have been times we’ve rooted for or against them.

I recently sold #3-20 (like a week after I got 20) because I had filled the box. I only collect the TPB of your book (no others, take that for the ego boost it is) because I feel comics, like all books are best read and then shared.

Land of the Dead: Disappointed. I know the critics thought it was Romero’s best but to me it showed that if your name is George and you haven’t touched your franchise in over 20 years then your first attempt back at bat will be a dud to your true fans. I thought the comparison between the undead and mexicans was anything but subtle and made the movie overly preachy (again, this is why I’m loving your book, all the social commentary is buried deep within the simple need to survive). Still haven’t seen Undead and I’m still hoping your book will become a television series. Anything new to report?

Nope.

I don’t have any questions this time. I’ve learned (as you stated in the last letter column) that all the questions I have I don’t want answered in the letters column. All I can say is as long as this book is being written I’ll be reading it.

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS- I’d like to point out that you’ve made me rethink all those “dumb Kentuckian” jokes we like to tell here in Indiana. Darn.

Man... you guys tell dumb Kentuckian jokes there? That’s not cool. We just make fun of people from Ohio here...

Dead crew-

Hey, fellas. As a HUGE fan of all things zombie, just wanted to drop you a line to let you know how happy I was to discover your comic. As opposed to writing a general stroke letter, I’d like to let you know what it is, exactly, that I like about it. First, you’ve done a great job writing a story about people, not zombies. Good idea. That’s what made Romero’s classic films classics in the first place. Second, this is one unpredictable comic. I never know where it’s going. I love that. I can’t tell you how much I hate predictable horror stories (Hollywood, I’m looking at you). Third, the artwork is excellent. Keep the zombies gory and disgusting. Do with your artwork what make-up effects can’t, and what CGI continually screws up: believable depth of damage.

Oh, and I realize you plot out your stories pretty far in advance, so this might be a futile suggestion, but here it is anyway: NEVER reveal the exact cause of the zombie holocaust. If you’re compelled to tell us something about the cause, keep it vague. Maybe give us contradictory explanations. Just don’t tell us outright. Keep it mysterious.

One last thing: I’ve also recently discovered a zombie novel your readers might be interested in checking out. Xombies, by Walter Greatshell. Not exactly a “traditional” zombie apocalypse story, but worth a look.

Keep up the great work.
-Barabbas Ward

Thanks for the recommendation. You’ll be happy to know that I don’t have any plans to reveal the cause of the zombies... and yes, I do have this plotted out pretty far in advance.

Dear Kirkman,
I have been looking for quite awhile a comic, any comic, to replace Cerebus. Since it had it’s 300th issue I have not been able to find anything worth spending my money on. I do not go for the Super Hero genre and I tend to favor black and white. Then my local comic shop guy gave me 3 or 4 titles to check out. The first one that ‘stuck’ was 100 Bullets. It took time to get my hands on Walking Dead as I later found out it is a hot read. But knowing that it was black and white (and being a Zombie fan) I knew I was going to give it a try.

I am glad I did. I bought the first 3 trades. They were very interesting. Admittedly, I was thrown for a loop when artists were switched but that was a mild bump-in-the-road. I find that using the human viewpoint is rather compelling. It allows me to think ‘How would I react’ under these circumstances.

My only criticism is that the pacing is quick. Almost too quick. It tends to not allow what is happening to sink in. By the time I have an opinion or feeling about something we are into the next crises.

At Herschel’s farm it may have been more realistic if the whole barn incident came up much later. It was already starting to get cold and zombie activity waning. More time in the safety of the farm, to give a false sense of security, would have set up the loss of Hershel’s kids and Herschel’s decline into despair better.

Maybe so, but at the time I just wanted to keep things moving. In hindsight there are plenty of things I would do differently. All in all, though... I LIKE that the book moves at a quick pace.

Also, Thomas should have been on the loose longer. Thomas would have laid low for a bit before making another attack so quickly. As if he was still on that first high from beheading the first two girls and would need to come off of that before attacking again. I think he would revel in his captive prey’s uncertainty and misguidance as to who was the killer. Plus it would have been a nice back drop for some Hitchcockian episode were everybody turns on each other.

I know this may sound more negative and positive but, truly, I am enjoying it immensely (not too many comics have you thinking after you stop reading) and I plan on being with you for the entire run

Good luck,
Dawson

Thanks for the kind words.

Mr Kirkman

First off I’d like to say that your comic kicks some serious undead ass. I’ve been a huge fan of the Romero style zombie world (it even influences my own artwork to a great degree) ever since I was a child. I must say that your comic lives up, and I dare say surpasses, the standard that he set for the zombie genre. And after the loss of the services of the great Tony Moore as your lead penciler you still managed to fill the void more than adequately. The comic grows better with each issue.

Now, after my gratuitous butt kissing, I have a suggestion. I know that you have plot ideas and characters already made for future issues so I have no misconception that just because I come up with a potentially good idea that it will ever enter the comic. But I had thought up a nice character in case you’re looking for new suggestions.

The idea is as follows. A survivalist, even before the zombie holocaust he loved to spend months in the wilderness surviving off of the natural flora, emerges from the forests around the prison area and notices that the zombies are being drawn towards the survivors. Thus he investigates only to discover the inhabitants of the prison facility. Now the kicker is that he had his best friend, his loyal dog with him the entire time. At some point the dog was infected by the zombie “virus”. Now being the loyal (if simple-minded) friend that he is the dog remembers all of his commands and still acts as the right hand of his master. Now, since he knows much of survival the man would be a great asset to those who inhabit the prison. But he refuses to leave his dog behind, he loves the creature.

I could see this character having great depth, and it would add a new dimension to the zombies and how they are turned and to what extent they can retain humanity. Humans go bloodthirsty and yet a dig remains much as it has always been.

As I said before, I don’t expect you to introduce this into the comic, but I thought I’d share the idea anyways. It’s even possible you had thought of

something along this line before now. I just thought I'd give my two cents. Keep up the excellent work.

Adam Aubin

I'm not really looking for reader suggestions on new characters, sadly. That opens up all kinds of tricky legal issues. Also, there aren't any zombie dogs in this book. I know you said you didn't expect me to use the idea, but I thought I'd let you know anyway. Thanks for the letter.

Dear Storyteller of Warm Fuzzy Tales,

Are they still making this comic?!?! Just kidding. I liked the walking dead character bios. Try to put in 1st and last appearances if ya could please. How bout some maps there, Magellan? I know the prison situation is gonna break soon. Have no clue. Maybe the generator will shed some light.

Brendan Walsh

I'll try to add appearances to the bios soon. That's a good idea. The map seems like a bit more work than I'm willing or able to do at this point. Plus, I don't really like being nailed down to a set area. Knowing the prison is in Georgia, south of Atlanta is enough for me.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Is it possible to take out a zombie if you repeatedly hit it in the head with a Walking Dead Hardcover?

Thanks,
Paul Shiple

We'll soon find out.

Yo,
Since I started reading the Walking Dead I've become obsessed with zombies. I often dream about what would happen if there really was to be a zombie apocalypse. I've also found myself searching for other zombie comic book series and holding zombie movie nights! So, thanks for everything. I'll send photos when I finally get some of the Walking Dead artwork tattooed on me.

It sucks, it's late August and I've only read up to issue 20 because that's all that's arrived here in Australia! The frustration!

You're getting them about as fast as we do here.

Anyway, the artwork, depth and everything about the Walking Dead rules! It's also refreshing to see a female who's a tough as fuck, rogue zombie killah! I'm hoping that in the issues to come you will reveal more of what the other parts of the prison look like. I almost wish I could go exploring myself.

x Franca x

Now, you guys have got to stop with this zombie dreaming stuff. I mean, really... it would be a BAD THING for this to happen in real life. You're starting to creep me out. Loonies.

Hey Robert,

Well, now that we're into the twenties (big congrats) I Guess I might as well pledge my undying (pun intended) allegiance.

Firstly, thanks. It's been a long, long time since I've looked forward to any monthly comic as much as Walking Dead. Since Preacher, Starman, Transmetropolitan and Hitman wrapped up, There hasn't been much in the way of well written, well drawn, this -will- have- an- ending -someday monthly fare. Dude, Walking Dead sits proudly in the ranks of all those titles I mentioned. This is, without a doubt, one of THE best comics available- Invincible being a close second, and Hunter-Killer, Hellblazer and that Vaughn guy's Ex-Machina rounding out the top five. Man, every time a new issue hits, I re-read my entire collection. It's gonna be an enjoyable hell when this gets into the sixty and seventy issue mark...

Secondly, Zombies scare the shit out of me. Creepy fucking things... Anyway, I might as well join in the act...

- Walking Dead would suck as a movie. It needs to be said. I've been farting around in the industry long enough to know there is no way you can cram the scope of a series like this into two, or even three hours. I'd far prefer to see Walking Dead as a HBO TV series or something like it. Thirteen episode season, much like The Shield, or the Sopranos.....Shit, the first two Trades are the first season, easy.....All I ask is that I get to direct....or at the very least, Staff writer. Simon Pegg gets a role, of course- but so does Bruce Campbell. I'll think up some casting ideas.....
- Was it just me, or was anyone else expecting a little more from Land Of The Dead? Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it- a lot, after all, Zombies, Romero, and Asia Argento(mmmmmm)...but I just thought it'd be a bit more....epic, or something. More scope.More Tom Savini. More zombies.....less zombies shooting guns!!!!!!
- Speaking of Mr. Savini- Worst Zombie film ever? Children of the Living Dead. Tom buys it in the first Fifteen minutes, and it sucks worse and worse after that. And I'm the dumbass who bought the DVD.....House of the Dead being a close second....
- The Zombie Vs Shark in Zombie Flesh Eaters does indeed rock.
- Don't be thinking you'd be screwing the fans by doing the occasional Walking Dead Annual or special. I'd happily shell out for it, and I'm sure others would. It might be a good place to spotlight other parts of zombie invasion, or show other characters While leaving the primary series to Rick and the gang. Hell, I think it'd be cool if a special or yearly one shot flashed back to the first few days of the infestation- You might say that we've seen stuff like that before, in films and such, and you'd be right- but we've never seen it get the Kirkman treatment.....
- For fucksake, don't let Tyresse have gotten bitten.....
- I get this funny feeling that Rick and Lori are heading for a nasty break up....
- For the life of me, I can't understand the comparisons to 28 fucking days later. okay, a guy wakes up from a coma.and that's about where it ends. they weren't even zombies, for Christ sake. And 28 days really got boring after they left London.
- Since Simon Pegg keeps hassling you, do you know if the rumors about a sequel to Shaun of the Dead are true?
- I for one, am happy to never know the cause of the zombies.
- Any chances of seeing zombie "sweeper" teams, in the lines of the sheriff's crew from the end of Night of The Living Dead? Surely some of them are still around.....?

• Let's

keep Axel around for a while, huh? He seems okay, for a convicted felon.....

- Anything big planned for issue twenty five? A double sized issue? Please?
- The intestines getting caught in the rib cage was hysterical.
- Coming to Australia anytime soon? Supanova, Brisbane- I'll buy you a beer.
- Isn't it about time some one at Marvel started to give Nova a bit more credibility? Tell Bendis he needs to put him in New Avengers.

Anyway, amigo, thanks for a great read. This series is just as great as Preacher ever was- and man, that is no small praise. I'm in for the long haul.....Or at least until the dead rise and you need to stop writing and evacuate to a defensible location.

Cheers,
Jake Reedy

To answer one of your questions, issue 25 is just going to be another regular-sized, regular-priced issue. I figured it'd be better to just keep plugging along rather than get (further) behind schedule trying to put a bigger issue together. It'll still be cool, though... I mean... stuff is going to happen and all.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

I'm just writing to say that last Wednesday was my lucky day. I went to the comic book store and someone brought in their run of The Walking Dead #2-10. Don't ask me why. The owner of the store asked me if I wanted them. I bought them for cover price and read them all in one sitting. I really love the book and I'm going to get the rest of them next week and be up to reading it monthly. I thank Charlie, Cliff and Tony are also doing some great work as well. I love the Day and Dawn of the Dead. But zombie stuff has been sucking lately so I thank you very much for your work on this book and I couldn't agree with you more running zombies SUCK. Thanks for your time.

Cary Shenk

Cool. You keep reading them, we'll keep making them.

Well, that's it for another really long letters column for the Walking Dead. We'll see you in a few weeks or less (yeah, we'll be catching up on the schedule over the next few issues. That's good news, right?)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

And like lightening here's issue 23. As you can see this issue shipped a mere two weeks after issue 22 and in another two weeks you'll see issue 24 on the shelves. We're trying to catch up on the schedule a bit and so these three issues are shipping in RAPID succession.

It's not the most idea of situations for retailers, I know... but we've got to get that hardcover out in time for Christmas so I'm hoping you people will be understanding in light of that.

Also, in an effort to get this book to the printer really quick-like we're going to be cutting the letters column back a bit (well, A LOT). We should be back to our regularly scheduled insanely long letters column next month, so don't worry.

Now, let's answer some letters, okay?

Once again, great issue. Who's Michonne talking to? I think she's talking to her dead boyfriend. She seems a lil' nutty like that. I mean, notice she didn't mention what she was up to with Tyreese? Never try to keep secrets from the voices in your head people! It'll only result in getting your ass killed... of course, head voice might have to take a number after Carol!

Wheeee! I just love all this soapy smut! But please, less naked Glenn, alright?

You can't have one without the other. Beggars can't be choosers y'know.

Sure hope Allen pulls through if for no other reason than to answer the question first posed (but never satisfactorily answered) in Day Of The Dead about whether or not severing the inflicted area of the body would save the victim. It'd also be great if he was bitter and resentful to Rick for cutting his leg off. Talk about your irony.

Anyway, great job once again all. I still don't like Rick much these days, but he really did pull a solid with Allen so I'm willing to reserve judgement for a bit longer.

Remembering to sign this time,
Darryl Etheridge

P.S. I don't remember ever reading what you thought of Land Of The Dead.
Well?

Just read some past letters columns. I've talked about Land of the Dead about a billion times now and I'm NOT doing it again.

Sigh.

I liked it. I thought it was a good flick. I think the only reason it doesn't SEEM as strong as the other three is because we've all seen the other three nine thousand times and we're really grown to love

them. Also, I imagine the slightly longer director's cut will be better. It's certainly no Phantom Menace. I liked it. Tell your friends.

Dear TWD crew,

Issue #21 was fantastic! The whole team really pulls together to make the comic better than what you'd expect from the average comic. I like that Robert's writing is through the characters, not about them. Case in point: three of my favorite panels in the book happen on page 3 when Rick mutters "That's not how it works..." to himself while thinking of what to do. That's great. I tend to compare movies and comics a lot (both visual media) and that progression of those three panels is the sort of thing an actor would think to do, but probably wouldn't appear in the script that way. It shows the reader that you're really in the minds of the characters. Charlie, as usual, does a great job of showing shades of emotion in the characters' faces. I love that; it reinforces the ebb and flow of the story's emotional level. As for Cliff, I can imagine that for some it would be very limiting to only work in grey tones, but he continues to enhance the art to such a degree that I can imagine a plethora of colors in the characters' world.

I thought the Clive Barker quote from Andrew Garcia-Price was pretty neat. I had never thought about the zombie concept in that sort of way. I had always assumed that it was just a personification of the basic fear of death. Ya' know, death persuing the living, never tiring, never slacking. Death consuming the living. I guess that's why I tend to prefer "slow zombies" over their running brethren, because I feel it better embodies the slow but steady approach of death.

It's funny to read issue 21 and the stuff that happens with Michonne and then read the letters responding to issue 19 and all the people who were buzzing about her! I doubt any of them expected her to turn out to be some reality TV influenced nutjob! The last two pages were great, it totally captured that "video journal" thing that is the cornerstone of most reality TV. The whole thing seems to explain some of her actions as well: falling in line with the 'leader' (Rick); becoming a team player; and the stuff with Tyreese - making alliances with established 'players' based on sexual attraction? - total reality TV. I'm now interested in seeing whether she was always crazy or it was just the situation of the zombies that made her snap.

I think you're reading into things just a bit when you associate Michonne's character arc to reality TV. She wasn't so much doing a video journal as she was talking to someone I didn't want you to see. Don't sully this comic by comparing any part to reality

TV. It's insulting. Now, if you'll excuse me, Survivor is on tonight and I have popcorn to make.

Course, in a couple of issues you'll probably reveal that she was speaking into a microscopic camera to her government superiors or something like that and I'll be the one who looks crazy! ^_^

At any rate, keep up the stupendous work!
-Craig Dresser

Wait, GOVERNMENT SPIES!! MICROSCOPIC CAMERAS... that's not a bad idea... maybe she's working for the aliens.

Yo Robert Dude!

I had this dream last night where I was reading The Walking Dead issue 500 the cover was so kewl , Rick was standing on a pile of dead humans. Inside he was a zombie/cyborg working alongside an all grown up Duane, who seemed like a mad scientist. Only thing is they were taking out the humans. Wierd stuff man, please get out of my head! Oh by the way I saw "40 year old virgin" and you're famous now even more :) he was reading a copy of marvel team-up (#4 I think) with Iron Man & Hulk.I got wierd looks in the theatre when I raised my fist and screamed "KIRKMAN RULES" anyhoo if anyone else has any kirkman sightings out of the funnybooks please let me know!

Rob Steal

I don't want to alarm you in regards to your "dream" but what you were actually seeing was a little thing I like to call "the future." Have I blown your mind yet? No? Well what if I was to say that was actually issue FIFTY!

Yeah, I know. I'll give you a minute.

Dear Walking Dead,

Before I say anything, I'd like to say thanks for printing my letter in issue 20, no one has ever printed something I wrote, so thanks.

With that said, the idea of having the bite kill a person, but not turn a person, has got to be one of my favorite ideas you've had and adds a fresh twist on the zombie genre once bitten rule. And I loved the panels when Rick figured it out, props to Adlard on his spot on art. I also feel extremely bad for carol, I didn't think I'd give a shit, but there ya have it. Your storytelling is so good I actually care about all the characters. Cept Otis, I did at first, but after that nigger comment, he can get torn to bits for all I care. I mean even after being saved by Michonne and realizing that Tyresse might be the one of the few people he'll know for the rest of his life you'd think he'd drop the racist thing.

You'd think... but apparently he's just a shit head.

That said I love where the book is going, I love that it's a people story with zombies, not the other way around. And most importantly, I love that its a never ending story, I mean if the book last that long, we could see Carl grow up in to one bad ass survivor, cowboy hat and his daddy's axe. Just saying it'd be really fucking awesome.

I don't know if we'll be around THAT long but I'd certainly dig it if we were.

Finally, in my last letter, I realized I didn't name, the comic book store I go to every Wednesday, Cosmix (in Montreal QC) and that made me feel like an asshole cuz the owners are fucking great, had they not suggested the book, I'd have never ever read it. Which would have been a real shame.

Sincerely,
Jon Maggio

p.s. seing most everyone get to plug something can I plug my own website www.jonmaggio.com

Thanks for the fine read again.

Y'know, technically you're getting to plug TWO things. Your comic shop and your website. The way I see it that's just not fair so I think I'm going to delete the plug for your website.

So does Image have a new rule that every Kirkman book has to be released on the same day every month? Two months in a row Invincible and TWD have come out the same day, and this week Battle Pope was added to the mix. Not that I'm complaining. Getting a nice big chunk of Kirkman once a month isn't a bad thing by any means. And at least I've got MTU to fill the gap.

Well, that's my fault. I seem to turn the books in on the same week. For some reason it always seems like the letters columns, lettered pages, and coloring for all the books ends up getting completed at the same time. It's weird.

About issue 21: 6 panels of "THUNKS!!"? Damn! I can't help but wonder if someone's going to make an artificial foot for Allen (if he survives, that is), or if he's just going to have to hobble around the prison yard. How would you even go about making a foot? I guess Herschel would probably be able to fix something up. Why am I so concerned about this? I'm glad you're featuring Axel more now. He seems really interesting to me for some reason. Maybe it's because he looks like Santa.

While reading the letter column to 21 it appears everyone wants posters. Well, when I was at WWC, Tony was selling large-sized prints of his TWD covers...why not just market them? I only had the cash to get one (issue 17), but I'm already hoping I'll be able to get a couple more next year.

There will be a full-sized, full color poster available early 2006. How's that for service?

Speaking of WWC, while I was at your booth, I was trying to decide what to buy of yours (seeing as how I already had all of Invincible and TWD, my choices were limited), one of the guys working there actually talked me out of buying Cloudfall or Brit (it was Sunday and I was low on cash, so I could only get one) in favor of Tales from the Bully Pulpit. Considering you call it "one of the best comics ever made" on the back cover, you might not be that upset, but that's seven dollars I didn't spend on your stuff. Long story short: make sure the guys working the booth next year only try to sell your stuff.

Hmmm. Looks like I may need to have a talk with young Benito Cereno.

One last thing...thanks to TWD I have my first official "comics friend" after reading for more than ten years. Sure, every week I have to listen to him say "Damn, when are we going to get a new issue of Walking Dead?!" but it's worth it. Thanks for that.

Aaron Stege

Well, you and your new friends will be happy to know that I'm currently working on the letters column for the next issue RIGHT THIS MINUTE. It'll be in stores before you know.

Brave Sir Kirkman,

Ahh...late night letter writing. What a better time? I forgot everything I wanted to write. I guess I'll wing it. By the numbers...

1. I am quite pleased that I'll be picking up issue 22 on my birthday in September. I'll be 22, as well... Luckily I age by years while you remain faithful to the monthly system.

Yeah, 22 in September... uh... sorry about that.

2. I am a huge fan of your book and it gave me faith that monsters have awesome stories and not just blood and guts for entertainment.

21. The cover to issue 21 is one of my favorite comic covers of all time. The butterfly is what did it for me.

C. I'm done numbering.

About 2 months after I read the first collection of TWD and had a Romero-thon with my friends over winter break I made a decision. Perhaps life altering. See, I have wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I saw Superman when I was four. Lately, with the drudgery of college bringing me down I thought I ought to just go for it and make a movie. With some influence from TWD and Romero I decided to do a zombie film. With heart. And brains. My plans for the film were to get some recognition and hopefully (beyond hope) get a chance to say "I could direct TWD should it be transferred to film and played on a certain home box office network" (which, to get the full story in, would be the best medium in my opinion). And as soon as I began scripting my flick I heard TWD might get made before I do. I was devastated. But not devastated enough to give up. I will hopefully start filming my zombie flick in late November and if I can cut it together quick enough maybe, just maybe, it might get noticed and give me a little film cred. Even if I don't, this is one book I'd love to see faithfully adapted to film. Keep up the great work on the page and I'll keep spending money to read your books (all of them) even though I work at my comic shop and could just as easily read for free.

Yeah, who knows IF Walking Dead will ever get adapted to TV or film. I'm not losing any sleep over it. I'm happy to focus on the comic.

This ramble.is over,
Sam Whitewater

P.S. What is with the alien invasion discussions? I only started reading the last couple of letter columns (can't find all the back issues) and I must have missed something. That's just what I need, zombies and aliens. Together. If that happens, I have to see a zombie and an alien holding hands and skipping through fields of dead bodies. That would be an awesome visual...

It's pretty much public knowledge that this book is going to "jump the shark" at some point after issue 75. That's when I'm going to start throwing in aliens for no damn reason. It's a running joke here in the letters column. Thanks for playing.

Dear Kirkman,

So right off the bat I ask to be a zombie and get turned down, now you tell a guy that you'll think about it. Just kill off Glenn. That's pretty much me...

Oh, and good job with the bite just killing them, not infecting them. I think we talked about this before, but a lot of people are confused about this. Everyone is infected already! Awesome Day of the Dead moment in issue 21 by the way! I expected them to cauterize the wound, but I like the way you handled it.

I did so much research for that I think I could successfully amputate a limb at this point. I'm glad you liked it.

Can't wait until issue 25! Here's to seeing a guy get carried off and feasted upon by zombies, leaving only his severed arm squeezed within the blood-pressure monitoring device! Or something equally cool.

I'm dying to have a blond pregnant woman and a black police officer land a helicopter on the prison roof or something. It's sooooo tempting.

Questions:

1. Will 25 be a big deal in this book? (I ask this thinking to myself that every new issue of a non-canceled comic involving

zombies is a big deal)

25 will just be another issue. It's regular-sized and regular-priced... there's some cool stuff planned, but I try to do that EVERY issue.

2. How much did you love Land of the Dead? There are lots of haters out there.

See above.

3. What did you like most about it? Other than sequel possibilities.

I honestly think it had the best, most likeable characters out of any of the Romero films... and they all lived, which makes for GREAT sequel possibilities.

4. Did you know that the word "Zombie" (as referring to "a soulless corpse said to have been revived by witchcraft" formerly, "the name of a snake-deity in voodoo cults of or deriving from West Africa and Haiti.") was first recognized in writing in 1872 by Schele de Vere in "Americanisms"? It described, "Zombi, a phantom or a ghost, not unfrequently heard in the Southern States in nurseries and among the servants." Neat huh...

Now I know, and knowing is half the battle...

5. Did you SEE Zombie King #0!

Frank sent me pages before it even came out. I saw the cow before anyone else. Lucky me... I guess. Neat book. I wish Frank would do more.

So maybe the guy to win the Make-Me-A-Zombie contest could be the guy with the most printed letters (unless Piers wins...damn that guy).

Love,
Chris Pitts

I think you'll be happy to know that you're slowly edging Piers out in the most-letters-printed category. That fucker must have gotten too busy or something.

Robert,

Good afternoon. First, I would like to say that I have been reading comics since 1989 and never felt compelled to write to a writer/ comic letter column until now.

I have been onboard Walking Dead since issue #3. A friend of mine had turned me on to it. Since I'm always looking for a good read, I took his advice and haven't regretted it. I even sought out your other works. Invincible and Marvel Team-up are very good solid reads, but it's TWD I look forward to every month. Even when Tony stopped doing the interiors, I wanted to stop getting it, that's how fond I was of the way he drew these characters. But I found that the writing was so good that it kept me hooked. Tell Charlie that I have since come to love his work as well.

Tony Who?

You have become one of the great writers working in comics today. My problem with Issue #21 is this, The last few pages are so predictable. I saw this BJ with Michonne and Tyreese coming a mile away. I'm not saying this to sound like a literary expert on story construction, it's just that I thought you would go somewhere else with it. I didn't expect you to play it safe and go for the cheap mass audience thrill.

What gave it away? The fact that the cover for issue 22 with them KISSING was online months ago? Or did you actually see it coming in the story? I'll try to keep the covers a little less spoiler-filled from now on.

I was going to wait until Issue #22 came out before I sent this, but I came to the conclusion that there is no way for you to undo what's been done.

Hit me back
Clyde in NJ

It's all leading to something. Don't sweat it.

Robert,

I'VE GOT A VERY BAD FEELING ABOUT LORI'S BABY...

You've stated that the origin of the malady will not be a storyline, although in Issue 21 it's nature and infectious nature got me thinking. If Lori's baby is "born dead" (gulp) what would happen or even more horrific, if the baby perishes in utero and then...

...well you get the picture unless that's part of the plan.

I'm not ruling anything out--but chances are if it happened in the Dawn of the Dead remake it's not going to happen here.

I've been a comic fanboy for close to 40 years and truly thought there was no new concepts. I also thought it seldom that my emotions run high with comics, and long to 'feel something' (although I'm not gonna take it up the ass from Luke Cage, like Jessica Jones in Alias when she wanted to 'feel something').

WHAT?!

With Walking Dead AND yourself, both have occurred - a bold new concept with genuine shudders and creeps. You also convey the love of comics and comic fanboys, as I'm still amazed with ALL the letters you print and commentary.

Except for THIS issue, right? Everyone's going to HATE me and think I'm an asshole after THIS issue. Man, you guys are so quick to turn on a guy.

Loyalty goes both ways - I since picked up all your past work, just gotta get Tech Jacket.

Thanks again - hope I'm wrong about the baby, as that would hit rival Ennis for comic shocks.

John Panno

Or, y'know... it WOULD have if you hadn't given it away in the GODDAMN LETTERS COLUMN. Jerk.

Kirkman and Co.:

Just dropping you another letter to say how much I'm loving the ride so far. The Walking Dead continues month after month (give or take...) to be the best thing in print. Consistently, issue after issue, you put out a comic that is better than the one before it with no signs of slowing. In my previous letter to you printed in Issue #12's Letter Hacks, I (Who have been a HUGE fan of the zombie genre for the last half of my life) told you that I prefer the Walking Dead to any of Romero's works. While you pretty much said that I was a blasphemer, I still stand by my statement- Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead and Day of the Dead are three of my favorite movies in my collection, and yet, I'd take the run of The Walking Dead over them nine times out of ten. As such, I'm glad I was able to provide you with the "highest compliment paid to you"... You deserve it, man. Your book kicks mucho ass.

I still think if those movies were 24 hours long each you'd change your mind in a second. I just have more time to play with here--that's the only difference. Thanks again, though... it means a lot that you think so.

I've read through the entire run of the series (from issue #1 through whatever happens to be the latest issue at the time) going on ten or so times now, and by the sounds of a lot of the other fans sounding off in Letter Hacks, I'm not the only one. The Walking Dead pulls you in and doesn't stop to twist, holding your attention the entire time, every time through. Everyone I know that I've introduced to the series has read it through in one go, reading as much of it as they can. Then, when they're finished, the question I tend to hear the most is "Is this all you've got?"

There was a point where I was lending my Walking Dead

trades out to as many people as I could get to read them... at one point, a new issue was being passed through eleven hands... Then, I decided that they would have to start paying up in order to keep reading. I've even offered to pick up the issue for them as most of them likely haven't ever stepped foot in a comic store. You deserve the cash for the perfect, perfect book you've provided us with.

Wow, man--you're an all right guy. Really.

Speaking of buying your stuff, put me down as another vote in favor of Posters... I'd be all over a Walking Dead poster! By the sounds of it, the cover of Issue #9 seems to be the popular vote (and I tend to agree- it's my favorite cover thus far) but an original Tony Moore piece done especially for the poster would kick mucho ass as well. I'm also looking forward to December's Walking Dead hardcover volume and whatever goodies you're going to include in it... I can't wait! While you're at it, make any other Walking Dead crap you can get out there... t-shirts, action figures, decorative toilet lid covers- If it's Walking Dead, I'll buy it. (I guess I'm just a consumer whore...)

I'll be getting right on those decorative toilet lid covers. I can't WAIT!

It's good to see that the books are getting back on time... while I don't REALLY mind the delays (I used to read Battle Chasers), I still find myself getting anxious waiting for the next issue to find out what crazy twists you're going to unleash on Rick and the rest of the crew. It's also good to see that sales keep climbing... It's only a matter of time before HBO starts knocking on your door to produce a Walking Dead ongoing TV series... (Fingers crossed...)

Issue 21, as always, set the bar for the series even higher... How the hell do you do it, man? The scene with Carl and Sophia is one of the best the book has had to offer thus far (and that says a lot). It's stuff like this that make your book stand out from everything else zombie related. Brilliant, man... simply brilliant.

I'm digging Michonne so far, but like the rest of the fans, I'm dying to know her back story... It'll also sweet to see her in combat when push comes to shove. She seems like she'll be pretty cool in a combat situation. Cool twist on her at the end of Issue 21... I wonder just who it is that she thinks she's "conversing" with... Having her pursue Tyreese is a sweet play, too. A nice "soap opera" addition to the story with Carol catching a glimpse of Michonne helping Tyreese "let off some steam". By the looks of next month's cover, Michonne's just starting to stir things in the jail up too... Very nice.

If not a bit predictable...

The only thing that I question from Issue 21 is the fact that Axel is armed...

I know he's the only prisoner left and hasn't shown any signs of untrustworthiness but I didn't think that Rick and the rest of the group would take any chances after what went down with Dexter. I'm also surprised to see that the group is giving Patricia as many freedoms as she's getting after issues 18 and 19... In a situation such is theirs, you shouldn't get many chances.

Honestly what are they going to do? Lock her up and baby-sit her? It's not an ideal situation and they're making due. I doubt they'll be giving her a gun anytime soon.

Also, I'm going to take a shot in the dark and say either Glenn or Maggie is going to bite it soon... They seem to have a good thing going, and good things never last long in a world ruled by zombies. Also, I assume Billy is going to be zombie fodder soon enough as he really hasn't done much thus far... Ben and the other Billy (see, you already have too many Billys... kill one off) haven't really had much of a part in the story yet, either, and it'd be nice to see them used in some way, if only to feed the ranks of the living dead.

I would also like to commend you on your letters column, as not enough comics maintain them nowadays... It's nice to see you taking the time to answer the large amount of letters you get in a given month seeing as you're writing like fifty or

so books in a month. Another testament to how great the book is, is the very small amount of hate mail you've managed to receive, despite the open call for it. You even went as far as saying that a negative letter is guaranteed to see print and still, nothing. That said, um, kiss my ass or something... (Is that enough to have this letter see print?)

Oh, one thing I've been meaning to ask- Will the alternate version of Issue 10's cover ever see print in any way, shape or form? (You know, the one that I keep seeing online, with Rick with an axe in his hand, covered in blood, with the blanket wrapped around him? I'm pretty sure it's Mr. Adlard's art but it's hard to tell...) If it's an available variant, you must tell me where I can track one down... Every possible issue of Walking Dead must be mine! (Again, I'm a consumer whore...)

That cover is going to be used for THE WALKING DEAD SCRIPTBOOK which will be out a week or so after this issue. Buy at your own risk, though--it's got NO PICTURES. It's 40 pages for \$3.99, ask for it by name. Also, that cover is by Cliff, not Charlie.

I guess that's enough of MY ass kissing for now... Please, keep up the good work. I'll be with this book as long as you're putting it out- and that's a promise.

Corey Janson

PS- I'm also REALLY loving Invincible, too. It's great to see the diversity of work you have hitting the market. I only read it in trades, however, so the wait time in between sucks... Nonetheless, I can't wait to see what you have in store for that book as well. (Okay, NOW I'm done ass kissing)

Well, if you hate waiting for the trades, I've got an idea--BUY THE SINGLE ISSUES!! They've got letters columns, pin-ups, back-ups and all kinds of cool stuff.

The new woman was cool with the sword up until she started talking to no one in the jail cell. I think Rick might want to keep her locked up at night for a little longer! Lori is going to cheat on Rick again with that woman... freak! Love the book and can't wait for the next team-up book---loved spider-man's comments and punisher taking the finger off! Also cannot wait for Invincible and Spider-man's team-up soon!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Yeah, man... the Invincible/Spider-Man Team-Up issue is going to be OFF THE HOOK, YO! I highly recommend seeking it out.

Robert,
You are terrible. (Maybe that will get this printed. You said negativity is a plus). Now that your status as a human being is out of the way, I would like to comment about your alien book "The Walking Dead".

1) #21 had my favorite cover thus far. The impending danger of the kids walking into an onslaught of zombies was a nice little bit of suspense. Adlard has a very eye catching cover style that has not been seen since those Fabry Preacher covers that I loved so much. There's not been a boring one in the bunch so far.

Yeah, Adlard's doing so GREAT covers... they get so much better starting with issue 25, though. You guys are going to be blown away. (wink!)

2) Allen is my favorite character. He is by far the most noble and is the driving force behind the book. Allen is a born leader and if I were female I would want to bear his children. Go Allen! All sarcasm aside, I do like the way that you have used this character to demonstrate how I believe that 99% of people would react to this whole situation. Granted, he's a whiny little bitch, but I believe that the realism that he brings to the table justifies his existence.

Allen is one of my favorite characters in the book. I promise.

3) Some of these people seem pretty damn comfortable. I am assuming that you will not have this level of comfort last much longer. I crave (brains) a full-scale invasion by the zombies in the worst way and I hope you deliver soon (brains). I'm talking massive deaths and thousands of zombies raining from (brains) the heavens. There's a reason that almost everyone is dead, and there is no way that those fences are going to hold when thousands of zombies are pushing against them. You write entertaining dialogue, so an issue where everyone learns to farm properly might be okay, but massive zombie attack might be fun too. Just a though. You think it over and get back to me.(damn sarcasm again... brains...)

You've read this comic before right? Now... which one would I choose? A boring issue-long story where the characters talk about stuff and learn to farm or a non-stop action romp where zombies invade and kill everyone? I gotta say, I'm going for the talking issue 9 times out of 10. All joking aside, you guys won't be longing for zombie action much longer... you're about to get your fill... in a few issues. Stay tuned.

Questions....

1) Michonne is a slut. Can I get her number? I have a special phone that can call comic book characters, so no obvious "she's not real" jokes. In fact, I'm the one she was talking to at the end of #21, so I don't even need her number.

Man, can I get that number? I created her so I should get a free one. I think I'll have Charlie give her a boob job. Hey--can you get the number for Spider-Man, too? I'm a big fan.

2) Any chance of a spin-off book that focuses on different characters in the world and what is going on outside the core group? I think it might destroy the mystery of what's going on, but I would love to have a companion series to read every other week.

No plans for a spin-off right now... or at this point... ever. But who knows what the future may bring.

3) Will invincible ever show up in these pages? Maybe a cameo as a zombie...

No chance.

4) Does the I.Q. of the zombie allow them to do anything other than walking and attacking? Could they swim, or ride a bike? Or possibly use the internet to write a letter to this column? (brains)

They're wicked awesome at volley ball... but I don't want to spoil things past saying that.

Okay, I'm done. Please print this. It is the second letter in 20 years of comic reading that I have sent, so you must be doing something right. Thanks so much for keeping me entertained.

Justin "slam-bizzle" Manis

((please print this. I will send you some pecan pie if you do))

If I don't find a freshly baked PECAN PIE in my P.O. Box next time I check it... I'm going to reprint this issue just so I can take this letter out. And... and I'll kick you in the nuts or something.

Okay folks, that's it for this month. I'll make it up to you soon. Sorry this letters page is so short this time around.

Be sure to check out Marvel Zombies, the new five-issue mini-series Sean Phillips and I are doing for MARVEL starting in December. It's going to be really cool. I promise.

See you in a couple weeks (I promise)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 24... coming in right on the heels of issue 23. Pretty exciting stuff, huh?

Did you guys notice the last page of 22 and the first page of 23 fit together to form one image? Pretty damn cool, huh? I stole that from Erik Larsen. Erik's done all kinds of cool shit like that in Savage Dragon. If any of you reading this like superheroes at all, you should buy every trade paperback collection of that series every printed (well, one copy of each--I mean, unless you're going to read it twice or something) it's might good reading.

Be on the lookout for the Walking Dead Deluxe hardcover. It'll be in stores the first Wednesday of December and will collect the first 24 issues (yeah, that's everything up to and including this issue. Pretty cool, huh?) along with a bunch of extras like The original covers, the original proposal to image, some sketches by Charlie Adlard and Tony Moore... cool stuff. It's going to be an oversized monster of a hardcover and it'll clock in at around 600 pages. Also, it's limited edition. The print run will be kept to initial orders only... so this thing is going to retail for \$100.00. Steep, I know--but it's comparable to other volumes of this nature... and it's going to have a cool slipcase and everything.

Now let's answer some mail...

Mr. Kirkman,

Back in 1987-88, I was a youth collecting comics from "Crisis of Infinite Earths" to "DeadWorld" to "Aliens vs. Predator". In '90, I was in high school and lost interest in current comics (with exception to Spawn), and quit collecting altogether after losing nearly 90% of my comics to a storage accident. So...we get to 14 years later. I'm talking with a couple of co-workers, and found out that they both were into comics (weird thing is... I've worked with one guy for 10 years and never knew he collected comics!). To make long story short, I picked up an issue #12 (which was the newest issue at the time), and got hooked. I was referred to you by my co-workers and guys at the register. Now the reason I gave my sob story and have questions:

1) I heard "Walking Dead" doesn't print second printings, but I've got an #2 second printing. It's

the only second printing of any Walking Dead issues...Could mine be counterfeit? Your comic is pretty popular here in Indianapolis, and hard to find first printings even!

There are second printings of issues 2, 7, and 8. It's just that NONE of them have new covers. I don't like variant covers very much. The copy of issue 2, I imagine, is NOT counterfeit.

1A) This relates to question 1....Could you reprint issue #4? It's the only issue I'm missing out of your collection!

Yeah, I'll get right on that print run of ONE COPY just for you.

2) I've read in Hacks, that you've never read Deadworld? Is this correct? One aspect that's similar with Walking Dead is the fact that....Nobody's in the clear on who's gonna die next! Other than that, you guys have different themes presented in your comic. Plus, I like Vince Locke, but Moore and Adlard have the best graphics.

Well, not knowing who is going to die next is common in all horror fiction, zombie or otherwise. But yeah, never read Deadworld--until the reprints from Image started up. I've read the first issue of that.

3) Kirkman--How many Superpatriots series have you done? I have War On Terror and America's Fighting Force sans issue #3

Those are the only two. Both are four issues long. War On Terror is late, only issues 1 and 2 have shipped at this point.

4) Anyone know when Fear Agent is coming out?

October. Issue 2 should be out around the same time you're reading this. Pick it up. It's a great looking book.

5) Were you guys serious about making it to issue #75? I know EVERY comic worker wants to print gazillion issues, but to realistically make it that far,

would still be fascinating. Regardless, I'll be there for the ride till we get there. I promise!

We're in the mid 20s and the book is selling higher than it ever has. At this point--making it to issue 75 is looking more and more likely every month.

6) Adlard--What else have you've worked on?

Charlie has worked on The X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, Nobody, White Death, Codeflesh, Green Arrow, The Establishment, Warlock, Savage (collected in 2000AD) and loads of other stuff that I can't really rattle off the top of my head.

Well, that's all...for now. I hope this series is ongoing till issue 250. I'm sure you guys can handle the workload. Later!

Fred Robinson

You and me both--I'd like to do 500 issues.

You, Mr. Kirkman, have me to thank for instigating your phone number reveal on Newsarama. Yep, I went and done you a big favor by getting Bendis all riled up. For the record though I was not one of the idiots who called you. I ain't sinking that low. Anyways, I have a few questions.

1. Have you had a chance to read Mary Roach's novel "Stiff"? While it isn't exactly about the alive kind of dead it is about the dead kind of dead. It is a highly entertaining and very detailed account of what it is like to be, well uh...dead. Seriously though, you should check it out.

Never heard of it--I may have to look into that. Sounds cool.

2. Is there any chance we will ever see Tony Moore do a fill in issue? Come on man. I know you could get him to do an all Zombie 25th issue special.

Tony has moved on.

3. Will you ever do new Battle Pope work? I was a huge fan when these first came out and would give a left nut (you ain't getting Mr. Righty) to see some new Pope stories. How hard is it to throw a few stories together from that massive cranium of yours? Also, you have a knack for finding emerging artists, so I know you can find someone good to illustrate these new stories.

Toss in the right and I'll think about it.

4. Do you hear us fans when we say that we want some FUCKIN' Moore illustrated posters?

We'll see.

5. Can I please use the space in your book to tell my wife just how much I love her and how much I appreciate that she enjoys my interests almost as much as I do? By the way she is always the first to read new issues of Walking Dead. In fact I use your book as a bribe to get her to go into the comic shop with me.

Lame.

6. One last question here. What is the next step in the Kirkman/ Bendis war?

Thomas Michael Mackiewicz

Jello wrestling.

Robert,

Thank you for bringing comics back into my life! Like others, I had been on a comic book hiatus until I found The Walking Dead. I started with the TPB's, picking up volume one while on my lunch break... I read it, and immediately bought volume two the next day, followed by volume 3 when it was released! From that point on I've been collecting the comics as they're released, and I've been buying the back issues... (In fact I just won a copy of issue #1 on ebay for \$64...) I'm really happy with the way the comic is going, though I am worried a bit about Rick. I'm worried that something bad is going to happen to him... Hopefully you'll keep him alive for a long while. Alrighty, onto the numbered topics, where I write a comment or question with a number in front of it, and you post a response...

1. I highly enjoy Charlie Adlard's work, so don't get on my case about this very small gripe about his zombies. No, it has nothing to do with their hair... But their eyes. The only thing I don't like about Charlie's zombies are the eyes.. They're black holes with white lit up dots for eyes, so it looks like they're monsters or something. They should have human eyes (though glazed over with cataracts in most cases), they're not monsters or demons, they're dead human beings. But besides that, good work Charlie!

I just flipped through Volume 3 and I didn't find one zombie like that. He's done that from time to time, yes, but it's not how he draws zombies exclusively. There's a lot of variety there.

2. Action figures. Get them made. Seriously. You could have two versions of the characters made! Like, one figure of the character before the zombie plague, and one of the character during the disaster! It'd be cool to have figures of Rick and Shane as cops!

We'll see, no plans for toys as of yet.

3. Get the damn posters out already! And you better not respond to this with "I'll look into it"! And uhh.. if by the time this is printed (You better print it! I just spent \$64 on one of your comics!), good job on getting those posters out!

I'll look into it.

4. Animated series. A lot of letters I've read have talked about who should be cast as who for a HBO series.. I say instead of a live action show, have an animated series, like they did for Spawn! That way the characters would still look the same... You'd just have to find some voices!

I'd prefer live action, myself.

Once again, thanks a ton for making TWD, and keep up the good work! That goes to all of you who work TWD!

-Yancy Gotshall

**On behalf of the entire creative team,
THANKS.**

Robert,
It's good to see how rabid the fans of The Walking Dead are for your book. It shows you are really connecting with your fan base. As I said in my letter published, "This is one of the best books on the market today. I can see what the strong appeal is." That letter was also published in a micro-press pub called Fantastic Fanzine as a review, hence the grading scale which seemed to cause some of your fans to take offense. Therefore, I have prepared an appropriate defense.

First of all, I stand by my grading scale. I've been reading and, yes, even collecting comics since the mid-1970's, so I have a pretty broad perspective on comics, and I think I "grade" books pretty fairly. Let's say Alex Ross, George Perez, and Frank Miller get an A+. Does Charlie rank with these guys yet? Only if he is your current personal fave. If I were to grade issue #21, I'd have to bump him up to a B/B-. He is growing as an artist. Just looking at the characters' eyes in various shots shows an amazing depth and variety of emotions. And nice use of gray tones leaves no need for color in this book. I think giving him an "A" now would be doing him a disservice. Are you telling me the guy has reached his peak? I think not.

Secondly, I stick to my point about not enough zombie action. This is a personal preference. One reader referred to me as a "zombie comic guru" and I'll take that as a compliment. I like the blood and gore. I like it in the movies and I like it in my zombie comics. I enjoyed the issue, I just would have liked a scene or two of brains hitting a wall, y'know? I realize the title Walking Dead refers not only to the zombies but the dead-men-walking humans left to deal with them as well. I'm a fan. I buy the book. I'm just asking for more zombies, that's all.

As far as soap opera is concerned, this book is top notch. Lots of characterization and interaction between the large and diverse cast. Great stuff. But look through issue #21. Where are the zombies? Other than a couple shots of them on the other side of a chain link fence, they are nowhere to be found. Was the issue intense anyway? Yes! The foot-chopping scene was chilling and revealed the morbidity of what the world has become. Tension between characters was upped in several scenes. The plot moves forward. This is a good thing. Lack of zombie action is a bad thing.

My long-time pal Stuart Kerr wrote the first incarnation of Arrow Comic's Deadworld. I used to tell him the same thing. More zombie action! And he never told me to F off.

I save my ultimate compliment for last: I plunked down my hard-earned money for this book, and I'm going to continue to do so. I spent more than a cursory 15 minutes reading it, and even took the time to offer my personal thoughts in writing. Re-read that letter. I don't say this is the greatest comic in the history of comics. I don't say that, in fact, it's the greatest work of the English language. I do say that it's "one of the best on the market today."

I certainly don't expect you, Robert, to change your vision for my sake. But you've got a pretty big letters section, which tells me you want to know what fans think. So here's to honest communication between comic fans. And here's to The Walking Dead.

"The Peanut Gallery"
Ralph Griffith

Thanks for setting the record straight, Ralph. I'll put you down in the "wanting more zombie action" column of fandom. You'll be happy to know that I too have been craving some zombie action... so starting next issue, you'll probably be getting just a little bit more. That said, this book is always going to have long spells with no zombies. That's just the nature of the book.

I just finished reading issue 21 and it inspired me to write to you guys. This is far and away the best comic in the business. I am a big reader of Marvel, DC, Image and many independent companies and this is sooo much better than anything anyone else is doing right now. The key to this story is not the zombies but the humans and how well Kirkman develops them while at the same time bringing in new ones at the right time. This work is pure genius and will be remembered in the same light as early Frank Miller, Alan Moore type stuff.

Chad Morash

Tell that to Ralph Griffith--that guy wants more zombies and gave Charlie a B/B-... the dick. (wink, you know I love you Ralph).

Mr. Kirkman,

I know this a long shot, but I figure - what the hell. I run (but unfortunately, don't own) a small comic shop in Bloomington, IN, and out of our 30 subscribers, I've gotten 20 hooked on your work. Well, that's a lie. The work hooked them, I just shoved it under their noses. Folks are addicted to Cloudfall, Battle Pope [I loaned them my old FUNKOTRON trades], Invincible, Tech Jacket, Walking Dead, Marvel Team - Up, Marvel 2099 - I'm sorry. I should've just written your library.

If I paid for gas, lodging, and a beer from the local brewery if you drink, would you ever consider a visit to the shop?

Again, a long shot, but I figured, what the hell. Thanks.
Andrew Rosenbarger

I just don't have the time for these kinds of things these days. Sorry. I've got way to much work to do for any road trips.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Well, you're just not satisfied are you Kirkman? First you renew my interest in comic books with Invincible, then you make me fall in love with zombies through TWD. I hope you're happy. Anyway after picking up the Invincible trades, Ross at A+ comics insisted that I buy TWD, he even offered me a full refund if I didn't like it (tricky devil). So here I am once again spending my hard earned cash on yet another wonderful book of yours. TWD has gotten me thinking, I need to be "prepared" in the event of a full blown zombie invasion (not too prepared mind you, because If you're the sort of person who's really ready for zombies, you're probably so crazy you'll die soon anyway) anyway, here's my plan to escape Lexington in the event of "ZMOG! ZOMBIES!". I'm in a particularly bad part of the city from a "ravenous flesh eating corpse" standpoint right on the edge of downtown, between the Police station, the university and three

Hospitals. The first place zombies will be taken is either to the police station or the hospital so I've gotta act fast, as soon as I see reports of an epidemic involving cannibalism and infected bites, I'm gonna hop on my bike (there's no way I'm taking a car, have you SEEN the traffic in this town?) For protection I've got one of those ornamental piece of shit Katana's, sure it'll fall apart after a beheading or two, but it's light and better than nothing. At which point I cut across campus (which should be fairly deserted at night) and head towards the mall, once there I meet a friend (it's cool, he's in on this too) who has an apartment nearby, and happens to own a rifle. If the Zombies have overtaken the city at this point the two of us grab his truck and make for Wal-Mart (which will undoubtedly be full of zombies, I mean how many people are in Wal-Mart at any given time? Hopefully we can take them out, but if we can't it's back to the truck) We load up on essentials after clearing the zombies: gas, food, ammunition, guns, and camping equipment. Once we're supplied we make for that castle outside of town, (you know the one that rich guy built for his wife before she left him) I know the house inside burned down but the walls are still standing, and come on it's a freaking castle! We hop the wall, kill maybe one or two zombies inside since no one really lives there and hey, we're set up for quite a while. Anyway what do you think? Want in?

Yor ob'd't,
Brent Lengel

That's it, I'm MOVING.

Crikey Kirkman!

#21 had the best twist ending so far, as far as I'm concerned. It's going to be fun finding out what exactly is up with Michonne and all that Fourth-Wall-breaking stuff, and it's also going to be fun to see how you play with that technique; yeah having her go all She-Hulk and talk directly to the readers would be a bit much, but you can still play with the idea without harming the serious tone of the book. As you did in the penultimate page of #19 in fact. Good stuff.

Also interesting was the developing relationship between Michonne and Tyreese; it's natural for people to gravitate towards those who are similar to themselves, whether that's in terms of interests, political affiliation or skin colour, and this development will make for some interesting stories I think. Is Tyreese's attraction to Michonne just a matter of them being the only black members of the "community", or is there something else? And how will it affect poor Carol? You've done a great job of building up a complex series of relationships between the characters, and it makes for a great read.

Oh and that Dave fellow who wrote to you in #21 sounds like he shops at my old comic shop in Canterbury. There can't be too many Debbies running comic shops. Small world.

kelvin green

p.s. this is the first time I've ever written to a comic.

Again, Michonne was talking to someone off panel not the reader. The person off panel wasn't THERE but we'll learn more on that later.

Masters Kirkman et al,

In issue 19's Letter Hacks, Corby Daniel mentioned how the horror genre will parallel the socio-political climate of the times. I remembered reading

an article in the University of Pittsburgh newspaper about a professor who was writing a book about this parallel, specifically films. I Googled for about an hour and found the article online. Professor Adam Lowenstein has written a book to be released in December entitled "Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film." I thought you and your readers might be interested. I'll pick it up. At that time of the article (4/4/05) he felt that it was too soon for the trauma of 9/11 to be available to film. I agree but I feel that your comic addresses the trauma not only of 9/11 but also of the current climate in our nation. Kudos for providing a cathartic and entertaining read.

First question: Have you considered going the Spring Pittsburgh Comic-Con? It's a small show but it's very zombie-centric. Both Romero and Savini attend along with assorted zombie actors.

I went back when I was doing Battle Pope, 2002 I think. Haven't been back. I got to walk through the Monroeville Mall though (the one from Dawn of the Dead) THAT was pretty cool. I wouldn't be opposed to going back.

First observation: Slow zombies are much more scarier than fast zombies? I asked my four year old (the true test) and he agrees. I've played zombie with him and his friends and they always get creeped out by slow zombie daddy, fast zombie daddy is just silly. Unfortunately its not considered proper for me to read TWD to my son but we did discuss the cover to issue 19 in great detail. We both thought the sword-wielding lady with the tamed zombies was really cool.

For once, we all agree.

Second question: I know you are prolific, but are you planning to start anything new? Any original ideas you'd like to pursue? Any existing characters you'd like to tackle?

I'm always coming up with new ideas for creator-owned series. I'm currently exclusive to Marvel and can't indulge. I've got a couple I just can't wait to do, it should be cool stuff. I'd also like to get my mitts on Spider-Man one of these days, in a regular series capacity--more than just Marvel Team-Up.

Third question: Did Bendis really baby-sit you?!? That would explain a lot!

Well, it would certainly explain my attraction to bald women. But yeah, I grew up on the same street as Brian. He's considerably older than me and from time to time, he'd baby sit my brother and I while my parents went out. This was well before my family moved to Kentucky.

Third observation: I was just going to buy the trades but decided to track all of the back issues, primarily to read the letters page! I appreciate your effort in each issue. I really love to read what others think.

I'm glad somebody enjoys this thing. I'm glad you all like to read these things but sometimes

I'd rather drive nails into my face. These things just take too long to do and I never give myself enough time. It's always "time for bed, but I'll do that letters column real quick before I hit the sack" and then here I am... FIVE HOURS LATER. Sigh. I dig seeing them in print, though.

As a native Pittsburgher who was born the year "Night of the Living Dead" was released, I've always loved the zombie genre. I feel that your book has really elevated the genre to a new level. Keep up the great work!

Take care,
Jeff Moreci

Thanks for the kind words, Jeff. The check is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Let me first start off like so many before me by saying that I love The Walking Dead, love it, and this is my first time ever writing to a comic writer, and the love of your book isn't even my full reason for doing so. I have been following TWD in single issues since #19, before that I borrowed the first two trades from a friend and picked up the third after reading one and two WAY too fast. Since then I chomp at the bit each month for the next issue, I just can't help it the book is so good, and I also enjoy reading your letters column (your replies make me laugh out loud sometimes). I have noticed though that your letters column seems to lack one huge thing, female fans! Well, now you will know that you have at least one. I buy the book, not my boyfriend (he just mooches and reads my copy).

I usually don't print letters from girls. I think girls are icky. Actually though, when I'm at cons, it seems we have a lot of female fans. This is really the one book I do that chicks seem to dig. My wife kinda likes the book, I think.

I have been working at a comic book store for almost five years and collecting comics for a bit longer than that, before that I read my older brothers books as a kid. Whenever someone comes to the shop looking for something new I suggest TWD, and this is very strange for me because up until six months ago I was hugely afraid of zombies. Seriously, it was my one totally irrational fear. We're talking changing the channel when zombie trailers were on TV and not even wanting to touch any books or comics zombie related, everything zombie gave me nightmares. But your book has changed all that, I now have Zombie Fever and I am not giving it up.

You are SUCH a girl. Good thing you actually ARE a girl. Or at least claim to be one.

As a woman reader I have to congratulate you on writing totally believable female characters. Thank you for not making every single woman in TWD a total nut case and pointless when it comes to tough times. I especially admire Andrea, and I'm hoping that Sophia stays on track with her wicked-ass boy friend getting ways. I also like the fact that Andrea takes matters into her own hands and hasn't let the death of her sister or being attacked by Thomas slow her down, it has only made her stronger. Thank you for creating such great role model worthy female comic characters, they are hard to

find in the male centric world of comics. As are female fans, or so I've been told at conventions, but I know that there are more out there than just myself, there has to be, because you and your work deserve it.

Thanks, it really means a lot that you like the female characters. I try to make this book as realistic as I can, aside from the walking dead people, of course.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.

Amy
(honest!)

PS. - I also love Invincible and recommend that whenever someone is looking for something new with tights.

And she likes Invincible too! I was almost convinced this really WAS a girl until RIGHT NOW.

Mr. Kirkman,
First of all, thank you for creating the best damned zombie book I've ever read. Second of all, congrats on maintaining the closest thing image has to a monthly book. It is appreciated after those relatively fruitless Deadworld years of the eighties and early nineties when one was expected to wait a minimum of four-five months between issues. And while I'm thanking, congratulating, and generally kissing ass, let me add that the lack of walking dead annuals, spin-offs, cross-overs, etc make for a much more enjoyable stacked comic set that can be easily accessed in a timely manner... plus, we (i.e. readers, collectors, creators, parents) will all know that issue one-hundred actually means ninety-nine issues of previous continuity have transpired--no more, no less. That being said, I would still enjoy a flashback or two in the regular consecutively numbered series complete with emergency broadcast systems and rescue outposts. I know we've all seen these scenes before, but I'd still love seeing some of these more familiar characters' experiences during those initial shocking moments. So, here's to issue 125 and beyond, Mr. Kirkman. I for one can't wait for the aliens. But, alas, I will. Hopefully, on a continued month-to-month basis.

Still waiting for the war,

Matt Cashel (writer of the now-temporarily defunct paradigm/lover of the obscene--as long as it is tastefully done, of course)

P.S. so how about that hbo series and toylne tie-in?

Matt, Matt, Matt... Image has many monthly books. Noble Causes, Spawn, Girls, Fell, Invincible and many others come out monthly and are usually on time. But thanks for the compliments all the same.

I don't want to do too many flash backs in the book. At first I was going to open every TPB with a flash back, so every six issues the book would have a little glimpse into the past. It was an idea I abandoned really quick. I want to just move forward from here on out.

Just one more thing... approximately... any plans, tentative or otherwise, for maps of the traversed lands. on a related note, how about timelines? Okay, that was two but, and this is no excuse, I'm a big fan of both.

That and shock troopers. Oh, yeah, those future covers are looking sweet.

Once again,
Matt Cashel

I'd like to do some maps and timelines, but as of yet, I just haven't had time. Maybe sometime in the future.

Dear Robert

There is a fascinating albeit grisly science project aspect to Allen's wounding. Will he die and turn into a dead walker? Will he survive? Will his left foot turn?

After his wife's murder, Allen has become an uninteresting dead weight. In other words, a target. Talking about targets, turning the lights on after dark will only be a source of grief for our survivors. It will only attract more roamers, and other less decayed predators with guns.

This time what really prompted this letter is what happened in another publication. In other words, CONGRATULATIONS for winning the Wizard Fan Award in the Favorite Breakout Talent category. TWD is my favorite title and Invincible is a fun read.

Thanks. The little statue is so neat. This was my first award (and let's face it could be my only one) so I'm enjoying the heck out of this thing.

Victor Rosario Fermaidt

PD Talking about Invincible, did you like Sky High? I read somewhere that a major studio optioned, Invincible for the Big Screen.

Paramount pictures optioned Invincible. I'm writing the first draft of the screenplay.

PD2 Are you going to Wizard's Texas show?

No. Not this year at least.

Have you seen Romero's The Crazies? Great card-playing gas masked soldiers. Again, looking forward to those post-25.

Matt

That just came out on DVD didn't it? Or was that the other--the vampire movie? Martin? I need to see both of those.

To all at the Walking Dead,
Ever since discovering your book at Comic-Con 2005, I can't stop reading it. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 go with me wherever I go. Since the books didn't show what the original cover arts looked like, I looked them up and eBay and damn! They were so cool, I just had to get every single issue. Tony Moore did a particular great job on Issues 6, 9, 16, 18, and 21. I'm not saying those are the only great ones, I'm just saying they're my favorite. I've asked this on a board I visit and got a fairly good response, but I wanted to know what your (Kirkman) thoughts on this were. What does the butterfly on the issue 21 cover mean to you? Thanks for sharing your talents with the world.
Mike J. Cervantes

It means there are still caterpillars running around somewhere.

Hi Robert Kirkman and the rest of the Walking dead staff:

I just finished issue #21. Another great read. At first, I didn't even notice the little butterfly on the barbed wire fence. (on the cover) How sweet.

So Allen got bit? Oh well, he was chronically depressed anyway.

Amputation? It didn't work out so well for Miguel in Day of the Dead, if you remember.

I have the Zombie survival guide by Max Brooks and unlike most guys who write in, I think its only OK, not terrific. Its entertaining, but nothing greatly original. If you want it, send me a P.O. box #, it's yours, I'm done with it.

I've already got a copy, thanks.

If you(or the fans) want some decent zombie books try The Rising and City of the Dead by Brian Keene, Down the Road by Bowie Ibarra, and Blood Crazy and Stranger by Simon Clark. The last two aren't exactly "zombie" books, but they're similar.

Anyway, thanks again for the great comic. I'm looking forward to the Big Hardcover edition of issues #1-24. I'm sure going to pick it up.

Thanks.
Chad Kanishock

The hardcover will be out soon. Start lifting weights now.

Dear Kirkman,

I've never really written to a comic book before, but I see your one of the few that actually take the time to actually read and answer some of your fans letter, which really impresses me.

First off I want to tell you that after hearing many good things about The Walking Dead, I finally picked it up to read it at issue #18. 4 issues later I have to tell you, that you are very quickly becoming one of my favorite writers. I liked them so much I bit the bullet and spent a decent amount of cash to get all the back issues, and I'm very glad I did!!!

Normally I really don't care for Zombie Comics, but the way you write Walking Dead it just works. You actually make me "feel" for the characters in your book.

My question to you is, besides Walking Dead, what other comics have you written that you are really proud of? I would love to check out some of your other stuff and just wanted to see what you consider some of your best stuff...

Thanks for your time, and keep on writing those bad ass stories.... waiting every damn month now for my next fix hehe....

Ed Sherman

That I'm proud of? Jeez... there's nothing that I'm embarrassed of--but I don't know that

I've done enough work to be particularly proud of one book over another.

I've done a ton of stuff. Battle Pope, SuperPatriot, Tech Jacket, Invincible, Brit, Capes, Cloudfall, Tales of the Realm, Masters of the Universe: Icon's of Evil, Reaper, Jubilee, Epic Illustrated (Sleepwalker), Captain America, Marvel Knights 2099, Marvel Team-Up, Fantastic Four: Foes, Magdalena/Vampirella, Space Ace... that's everything off the top of my head. I'm sure there's something I've forgotten. And there's MORE where THAT came from!

Kirkman and Co,

Just wanted to tell everyone involved that you are doing a great job! I have never been this excited about a series... well... EVER. Every month (or more-that was a jab at you Kirkman-)I head to my local comic shop (Chris's Comics in Marshfield, MA) and run home to get my latest surprise filled issue. I just finished issue #21 and I just have to comment on the Letter Hacks talk of staying at the prison or roaming aimlessly. I do think you could spend a lot of time at the prison there is just sooo much you can do with it. I could see the group finally leaving after an extreme event takes place (but at the rate bodies are dropping that would be hard to pull off). Ok now that I am done sucking your balls, I have a few questions:

1. Will we ever see and zombie animals? RE has zombie dogs but I am thinking about zombie gorillas, elephants, or even lamas. That would just be strange scene if the group came across a Zoo in their travels.

No zombie animals. Sorry. They just don't exist in this book.

2. Is there an address I could mail an issue and have you sign to me? I don't know if you have been asked this yet so bare with me. I would be willing to pay a fee or whatever but it would just be a great thing to have. Please, for the love of the undead give me an address! Also, please do NOT write the address of an asylum under this question.

I would love to do this, but I don't have time to be receiving and then sending out all the copies of the book I would get. Also, I'd just piss you all off by sending them off late. I'm really bad at finding time to mail stuff--just ask anyone. They ALL know.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone. Well, until the undead tear through my face like a crack head through a syringe wrapper - make mine Kirkman!

-Andy Cooper

Why's everyone always gotta be baggin' on the crack heads? What'd THEY ever do?

Hey Robert & gang...thanks again for printing my last e-mail. Still gives me a thrill to see my letter in print! I'm prompted to write this time through a preview I saw last night for December comics: Marvel zombies! Written by you with art by Sean Phillips (one of my fave artists). Ties in with the excellent Ultimate FF "zombie" 3-parter, but I guess you know that! Anyway, can't wait for that mini series!

Seems like Tony Moore isn't doing the Walking Dead covers from #26. Sigh, end of yet another era.

I feel the last few issues of TWD are building into something big. Though there's been action, it's kind of taken second place to the prison setting. Kind of like the calm before the storm. I have a feeling ish 25 the brown stuff hits...

Yes, I'm really excited to be working with Sean Philips on Marvel Zombies. It's going to be a hoot and I recommend you all give it a shot. Although, it's going to be NOTHING like this book.

And before I go, to "celebrate" Romero's Land of The Dead being released over here (England) - which I haven't seen yet, but will do I hope, the BBC are showing his other "Dead" movies on regular TV. Sunday night, Night of the living, tonight Dawn of, & tomorrow night, Day of (which I've only seen once, so look forward to that!).

Couldn't get any better for a zombie fan!

Quick question; do you have an end yet to the series? An actual number where the story wraps up, or do you still intend to keep on going while sales/your interest lasts?

If you guys like the book so much, why do you want it to end? Would you guys be happy if I said it's going to end at issue 50? Would you want it to end at 75? Is it just a matter of KNOWING the book is going to last a certain amount of issues. Like if I said that we were going to go to issue 129, that would just assure you that we had a good long time to go, right? I DON'T have a definite end in sight. I have ideas, but it's a long ways off, NOTHING is set in stone at this point. Just rest assured that I have a plan and will do this book for as long as I can.

I'm sure you've been asked this, but what do you think of "Land of the dead"? I've read mixed reviews. Interestingly enough, one film critic in a national paper gave the movie 3 stars out of 5 (which for a "horror" flick is excellent!)

Anyway, just as I was cutting my comic list, I read about Marvel zombies. Never mind, it'll be worth the financial strain!

Cheers
Jeff

Okay, from now on, anyone who asks me what I thought of Land Of The Dead automatically doesn't get their letter printed. Starting next issue. You've been warned.

They mention something in Wizard about Rick finally losing it. Hasn't he been slowly doing that since he awoke in the hospital? Do me a favor, don't pull a Blue Beetle and kill him. Come on, let Rick live!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

When has Wizard ever been right?

And with that I can finally go to bed. No more letters for me folks, I'm all finished. Woo hoo!

See you here next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, here we are at the landmark issue 25. We're not really doing one of those high-priced extra-sized anniversary issues... it just didn't feel right to me. So this is just another issue in a long line of issues, with many more to come. Who knows, maybe we'll do something special for issue 50. We'll see.

I'd like to take the time to thank all of you for sticking with the book this long and to those of you that came in late... I want to say thanks for giving the book a shot and then sticking with it after that. I really do appreciate you folks giving me the chance to continue telling my story. I think we've got some cool stuff in store for you all and it's only going to get better from here. Charlie and Cliff get better with every issue and there already didn't seem to be any room for improvement... so if I could just step up my game a little, I think we'd have a perfect book on our hands. I hope you'll all stick around for 5000 more issues.

In other news, if any of you out there like this book... and also like Marvel super-heroes... you might want to give MARVEL ZOMBIES a shot. I'm writing it and the art is by the super-talented SEAN PHILIPS who's doing a real bang-up job on the series. By now the second issue is probably out, so be on the lookout for it.

Also, I'd like to welcome aboard our new cover art team of Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn. I don't know if you guys know who they are. Charlie is an industry pro from way back who's credits include X-Files, Astronauts in Trouble, The Establishment, Savage (from 2000 A.D.) and a little known creator-owned book THE WALKING DEAD. He'll be handling the pencils and inks. Coloring the covers is the multi-talented Cliff Rathburn who did both pencils and inks on Brit: Red White Black and Blue as well as Fantastic Four: Foes and Reaper. He's also inking a few issues of Invincible over Ryan Ottley's pencils for me as well as gray-toning a the same little

known creator-owned book Charlie draws... they I already know they'll work well together. Let's give them a warm Walking Dead welcome.

Now, without further ado... let's answer some damn mail.

Robert, Charlie and the rest of the Walking Dead gang,

I have been a fan of the book since issue 4, and continue to maintain that it is one of a handful of inventive, and high quality zombie themed properties out of the plethora of zombie movies, comics, and books. I must say though, the current storyline is languishing. The energy and quality that is so abundant in the first 10 issues has slowly been eroding, and now that the characters seem to be locked into some kind of soap opera. I completely understand, or at least I think I do, the current prison story arc and how you are focusing on the unraveling of the group. I feel, though, that somewhere around the time Tyreese emerged from the gym after his battle with the zombie hordes, my interest in the characters took a nosedive. I don't feel that any of them have really progressed for at least the last 4 issues. Walking Dead is a story of survivors trying to cope, and I get the fact that right now they are hiding out, and trying to make a new life apart from the zombies outside the compound. I also understand that change is coming, and the ending of issue #22 brings things to a turning point. I'm not asking for more zombies, or aliens, or smart zombies, like so many others that contribute to this letters column. What I am asking for is some better character development so I actually care what happens to these guys again.

First, I should point out that not much time has passed in these last few issues, there's only so much character development you can do in a small

amount of time. Also,

the soap opera stuff of the past few issues was a necessary step in where I'm going with this book. It's not the way the book is going to be from here on out. I quite enjoyed it, but for some it seems, it's going to have to be a necessary evil. I think you'll really enjoy what I have coming up.

It would also help if I could tell the difference between them. Charlie Adlard, by all accounts, walked into a very hot book and was asked to fill some very large shoes. His work has definitely progressed since his tenure began, and the Rick-Tyreese fight of issue #22 really showcases his talent. It seems he has really gotten the action down. It is unfortunate then that in the more static sequences earlier in the issue, I found it hard to differentiate between Rick and Herschel, as well as Carol and Andrea, whose main difference seems to be a few freckles. It is nice that Andrea was given a scar to help make her stand out, and that Andrea..err...Carol is now seemingly dead. This will no doubt help in the identifying process.

I think it's a shame that this some readers blame Charlie for their inability to tell the characters apart. Charlie coming on the book coincided with a large influx of new characters and THAT'S why it's harder now. Also, the fact that the book is black and white doesn't help. The characters do call each other by name a lot but really, when you get down to it... their faces are ALL very different. Carol and Andrea for instance... have ALWAYS look VASTLY different.

I know this must read like hate mail, but please take it as criticism from a fan. C'mon guys let's get back on the ball.

Jonathan Bullock

I welcome the criticism... this is much more fun than saying "glad you liked the book, thanks for the letter" for the millionth time. Also, letters like this lead to things like the character list in the back of the book and my desire to hang myself. You're really doing us all a public service.

Kirkzilla and CO.,

Just got finished reading issue #22, awesome cliffhanger. I love this comic because of the cliffhangers, and the zombie shit is pretty cool too. I was reading the letters and noticed someone commented on an annual or special of some type. I think this would be a great idea if used in a certain way. I would like to see the events that took place with Morgan and Duane after they left the group. I see other people want to see stories from other events and locations around the world. I think this would not be as great an idea as everyone thinks, the less we know the better. Just my opinion. Couple

of notes and question:

Just bought the Land of the Dead Uncut DVD, movie is the bomb shit! I noticed on the cover, bottom left next to Big Daddy zombie, the zombie known as Bub from Day of the Dead. Cool little nugget for anyone that did not notice this. Although I did not notice a cameo in the movie by him.

That is actually Simon Pegg who has a small cameo in that make-up in the movie. He AND Edgar Write are on that cover I believe... multiple times.

Will you ever be appearing in the Boston, MA area for a signing? EVER? SOON? PLEASE? DOUCHE!

Been there done that. Where were you December of 2004? I signed at Comicopia and did a local show hosted by Larry from Larry's comics.

Just bought the new Dane Cook CD. Check it out Cook is a funny bastard. Now I'm just looking for anything to write about...so let me ask a weird question...Do you think if I had the interior of my ball sack laced with cotton, it would no longer hurt when being kick in the junk? Just a question that has been in my brain for a while now. And yes I do FREQUENTLY find myself in the position of having the berries bashed. And the pointless rant ends.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone involved. Peace-

Andy Cooper

Cotton doesn't do SHIT. Trust me... it STILL hurts.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
This is my third letter to you guys and I am afraid it is more of the same. I just finished WD#22 and I am still loving this series. I got onboard with issue #1 and I am still enjoying the ride. You guys are doing a hell of a job. Keep it up!

I must admit I write this letter with ulterior motives as well. I just read from Marvel that you are writing the mini series Marvel Zombies due out in December. They say that it is a spin off of the Crossover story line from Ultimate Fantastic Four. What can you tell us, or at least just me, about this? I really enjoyed that story line and the idea of you writing a Marvel Zombies story is AWESOME!!!! I can't wait!!!

It's about the Marvel heroes as ZOMBIES. It's wacky and gory and crazy and action-packed. I dig it and it's in stores now.

Michael Mora

P.S. In my last two letters I told you that my

friend was a "stupid jerk" for not reading The Walking Dead. Well guess what? He's still a stupid jerk who has not picked up an issue of this series. So in light of this could you print in Letter Hacks, "Hey Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!!" or something of that nature. It would be a dream come true. Thanks.

Hey, Terrence you're a stupid jerk for not reading our comic!!

Carol committed suicide--wasn't expecting that one! You might want to update the who's who--she is still alive on there! Wanted to let you know that there is a Walking Dead zombie novel on ebay right now by a Guy N. Smith from 1984. Did you know about this? I look forward to your zombie marvel limited series---they couldn't do better for the writer! Here is a question that I haven't noticed, if you did do a mini series on HBO, would you pull a Stan Lee and cameo in it? That would be cool. How much longer on the hardback collection? Issue #0---set it before the outbreak maybe? I Also cannot wait for the team-up with Spider-man and Invincible---very smart and unexpected team-ups yet! Another question, how come the survivors are not carrying around the heavy firepower from the armory or use the walkies to keep in touch? Anyway, thanks for the great job and keep'em dead!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

As evidenced in this very issue, our heroes are just now to the point where they can catalogue the items in the armory. I'm sure they'll find a good use for all that stuff VERY soon.

Dear Kirkman,

First of all, congrats on Ultimate X-Men! You changed my mind about it. I'll definitely check it out. Also, I have been using the picture of zombie Spider-Man in classic pose for some time now. Marvel Zombies looks great. And man, Piers always has me beat. It's all I can do to come up with five questions. He had like fifteen.

Yeah, but all of Piers' questions are stupid.

Before the questions, I wanted to warn everyone about a movie named Zombiez. Yeah ok, the title should have warned me, but I tried it anyways. Holy crap what a terrible movie. It was actually hard to tell who was a zombie and who wasn't. They walked normal sometimes, talked very well, used sickles (of all things), only ate intestines/cheap sausage, and hid, threw rocks, and laughed. There is a scene where a guy scares off a hoard by wildly shouting and waving a meat cleaver...

Avoid it like the zombie plague.

Ok questions:

1. Piers had a good idea. Any chance of an all zombie issue? You could even subtitle their moans. No wait, scratch that last part.

Yeah...

THAT sounds like a Piers question/suggestion. All zombie issue... right.

2. Okay, so do you think Miguel (Day of the Dead) would have lived, had he not thrown himself to the zombies?

Who knows... I guess the jury is STILL out on the whole amputation saving a zombie bite victim thing...

3. Assuming that at some point they will leave the prison, what are some other locations you have considered? Shopping mall? I thought the gated community might work out, until the snow melted. Spooky roller disco?

I really can't answer this... I don't want to give anything away.

4. We've been loyal long enough, how about that contest to be a TWD zombie?

Too complicated.

5. Did you ever join Zombiearmy.com? If so, did you ever get your free stuff? F'n Zombiearmy...

Man... if I did, I can't remember.

6. What is your writing time like? That is, what kind of routines/rituals do you go through when you sit down to write? Not like praying to Pittsburg five times a day, but like putting on a Kiss album or writing in between commercials of Lost. How does the Kirkman do it?

Well, it certainly has NOTHING to do with any KISS albums (sorry Kiss fans--it's just before my time). I usually listen to music while I write... right now I'm rocking out to some very mellow Neil Young. I'm totally relaxed. I almost pooped my pants just a minute ago... it's THAT relaxing.

Well, like I've said before, you need to work on being more controversial. The stuff is still great, but I haven't felt a WTF moment for a while. No cows though.

Oh, and zombie Sentry looks awesome. And Marvel Zombies is a good use of that internet derogatory term. Can't wait. Till the zombies start hiding behind rocks, throwing their voice to lure in their victim just to toss a small stone at their head to annoy them,

Your loyal fan,
Chris Pitts

Shit... have you read the script for issue 26? I need to take out that whole throwing their voices scene.

Mr. Kirkman,

I love me those zombie films. One of my favourite stories currently collecting dust on my cheap ass IKEA shelves is Dan Simmons' 'This Year's Class Picture'. I've even written a few zombie tales my own good self, which have been met without calls for lynchings.

You going to tell me how your story involves a

prison... but that it's okay that mine does too? I get that a lot.

But by some miracle, I had never heard of your comic THE WALKING DEAD. Until I saw Blair Butler--head writer on X-PLAY--praise you to the heavens on G4's 'Attack of the Show'. So today I went out and found a copy--WALKING DEAD #22.

Amazing. Blair was right--this is the stuff. But before I fully commit to your book, are all your fans as talented, funny and beautiful as Blair Butler? Because if so, then I'll fit in just fine! HA HA HA (choke, gasp, gurgling scream as hands reach through the walls...)

Best,
Sean Twist

Man... I never saw that segment of Attack of the Show. I always miss the cool stuff.

Kirkman,

You guys still have the best ongoing book on the shelf. Now that my friend Katie got me reading Invincible, you're the only other writer besides BKV that I read more 'n one title from. (I've trimmed my pull list to get more tattoo money.) Issue 22 was solid, but.... I know that these characters are the heart of the story and all, but how 'bout some zombie action? I better see some running and screaming and innards before long. After Rick and Tyreese get through beating the shite outta each other, that is.

I'm sorry, I lost you at "tattoo money." You'd be MUCH better off buying more comics. I don't even know if I can read the rest of your letter.

I read somewhere that you're, like, 26 years old. I'm 23 myself and I would like to hear your thoughts on the future of comics as a young person in the industry. I mean, I don't know how it is out there in other towns, but at my comic store, I'm like the young guy (excluding the few kids underfoot buying gaming cards). I know there have to be some young readers out there, and I know there are a few artists and the like who are young 'uns but mostly I just see people in their thirties and up when I'm in line for my holds. What do you think about where comics are headed?

There's plenty of life left in this industry to be sure. Saying anything more than that in this response would keep me from having room to print ANY letters. I'm sure I've said something more in-depth on the internet... you've got one of those internet things right?

Thanks in advance for printing this 'cause I'm not creatively vulgar enough for Bendis. Keep up the good work. Same to Charlie, Cliff, Rus and Tony.

Van Barnett

Thanks for the letter. You're just creatively vulgar enough for me.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

A few weeks ago I broke my silence, so to speak, as a comicbook fan and for the first time in all my twenty odd years of reading comics, wrote a letter to a comicbook writer/creator. I won't tell you who it was, so you can't be jealous, but I would like to think you're in good company. I love The Walking Dead. I don't care what anyone else has said, yours is the first zombie comic book that got it right! I'm sure you've heard that before, but I need to say it too. Feel good about yourself, sir. You're a wonderful, talented individual and I appreciate all the hours of entertainment you've provided for me and so many others. So thanks, dude.

I got a kick out of reading issue 22's letters section, or a couple pages of it anyway, and finding out that I'm not the only one who saves my current issue of The Walking Dead for last when I have a stack of books to read. I have to save it for last, yes, I have to savor it--it's just that good to me. I also tend to eat my meals more slowly than my friends do but that's beside the point I suppose. Like you said about reading your favorite books first, if I did that, I would probably have a stack of unread books too. Shit, I have a stack of books I'll probably never get to as it is but those were all bought years and years ago when my tastes were different. You tell a great story and it's hard for me to sit still for a month after reading the current issue. I had a ball reading the early issues since I had to go back and buy up back issues--I still don't have them all but I bought the first trade so I haven't missed anything. I read Days Gone Bye in one sitting and was hooked instantly and I needed more *immediately*. I went out and bought what I could find, hell I even went on eBay to get issue 7 and I ordered a bunch from online stores too but after a couple of weeks I had fifteen issues to read. Fifteen issues! IN A ROW! Even then, I stopped myself in the middle to savor this book so I didn't speed through it and find myself wanting too soon. I probably would have written in earlier, after reading other fan letters, but I was too keen on reading the next issue to stop and read the letters section. Anyway, enough about that.

Good job. I can't say anything bad about The Walking Dead. In fact, I can only point out things I liked a *lot* in particular. "Ruh.", as a sentence, as a word, as a zombie utterance. I don't know why but I just like it. It's a good zombie word. "A zombie would say that.", I said to myself, upon reading it way back when. You're going to read this and then write Ruh. as a reply in the letters column, I can just see that happening. And then I'll be crushed because it'll be like we weren't really talking but I'll laugh anyway and--er, I'm sorry. It's late and I'm hopped up on energy drinks. Oh yes, before I zap ahead, I just wanted to say that I absolutely

love the cover art of issue 1. It's brilliant. Tony scored huge there. Tell Tony he rocks for me. Er, please? Since I've probably tripped all the "insane fan alarms" in your head just now I won't take too much more of your time. Michonne's survival method, the chained "neutered" zombies and sword (silent weapon), that was ingenious. How the fuck did you think of that?! I also like how you're exploring the fact that everyone who dies also turns, regardless of how they died (headshots/braining being the exceptions). I don't think I've seen that explored too much just like the idea of amputation to avoid infection was never really fleshed out (sorry!) in Day Of The Dead since that particular character died shortly afterward. I've seen a few zombie movies, all of the Romero ones of course, but not a great many more so maybe I'm just uninformed in that sense.

Quick statements: I just read your interview with Suicide Girls guy Daniel Robert Epstein--good stuff and, I knew they were Thomas' remains.

Now, the dreaded fan questions (which may or may not have already been asked and answered--I'm so lame):

1. What zombie movies, aside from Romero's, would you recommend to me? I've seen Dead Alive, The Evil Dead movies, 28 Days Later, The Dawn Of The Dead remake, Shaun Of The Dead and the Resident Evil movies...

The Night of the Living Dead 1990 remake is a must. As is Lucio Fulci's "ZOMBIE" (but you can skip the sequels). UNDEAD is a brilliantly fun zombie flick. CEMETARY MAN is good. There's more but I'm having trouble coming up with them off the top of my head right now.

2. What'd you think about MTU making an appearance in the TV spot (haven't seen the movie yet) for The 40 Year Old Virgin?

It's in the movie too. Steve Carrel thinks MTU is funny... it's not just in the script, he's actually READING the book and thinks it's funny. I'm totally famous.

3. Do you ever write back to your fans? I mean, even just to send them their letters back with corrected grammar and spelling? I *know* you've thought about it!

I'm too busy for that nonsense. Half the time I don't even READ the letters until it's time to put the column together.

4. Ever find yourself wishing that fans still had to actually handwrite letters and send them through snail mail or are you glad for email making things that much easier?

Email is a godsend. I wouldn't print ANYTHING if I had to retype it myself... which is why I don't print snail mail letters.

5. Marvel Zombies, dream job? I saw you getting crap in the letters of MTU's early

issues for a rotted corpse... A big "Fuck you" to the naysayers maybe?

That's as good an explanation as any.

6. Did you read any of the Zombie World stuff from Dark Horse? Love it, hate it? I thought the Eat Your Heart Out one-shot by Kelly Jones was especially creepy myself.

That was good and Winter's Dregs was good. The rest... not so much... but those two were downright amazing.

7. Did you read Romero's comic, Toe Tags from DC? Love it, hate it?

Romero is the master... no doubt. Toe Tags... must have been an off day.

8. Am I in trouble for not underlining all the comic book titles I'm mentioning? Come to think of it, am I in trouble for naming other publishers?! Eek... Don't sic Erik Larsen on me!!

I'm sorry, you've brought this upon yourself.

Okay, I'm done pestering you. Thank you once again for The Walking Dead and I hope you go way past seventy-five issues. My heartfelt thanks go out to Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn as well, you guys rock too! I would say more but I'll save it for another letter... I tend to ramble on about artwork. Just keep doing what you're doing fellas, I love it!

Will T.

Ruh.

Kirk,

Just wanted to follow up to my last letter BEFORE I get slaughtered for my mistake. I stated that on the cover of the Land of the Dead DVD had Bud from Day in the bottom left corner. I am wrong, I just watched the Simon Pegg video and realized that it was him in costume. Sorry Simon but you look just like the Budman.

Andy Cooper

Sorry, you've already been scolded for the offense. I think the similarities in make-up are a coincidence.

First letter to a comic blah blah blah love your work blah etc. Yours is one of only 3 comics I read, the other 2 being "Y the last man" and "Fables". And of course, I always save your book for last, blah blah...

I watched Undead recently, and I have to agree with you that it was pretty good, except for two little things... first and foremost, Zombie FISH?! what the hell...? secondly, when they're all dashing up the stairs to the bathroom, the subtitles say "Zombie moaning", but I

clearly
heard one of the ugly buggers moaning
"Join Us...". Creepy. Other than that, it has
everything a good zombie movie needs. A
beauty queen, a pregnant lady, an inept cop,
and of course a

hillbilly that claims to have been abducted by
aliens.

By the way, did I mention ZOMBIE FISH?!

**It is a NEAR PERFECT movie isn't it? It's
it got ALIENS too!!**

Anyways, I had the thought the other day
that, since Andrew believed that he started
this plague, there's gotta be other people
out there with survivor guilt as well. I'm
just imagining some stupid Goth or Satanist
claiming responsibility for this and trying to
threaten the government or some such crap.

Yeah, stupid Goth Satanists....

I don't presume to give you demands, or even
mere suggestions, but you gotta admit, the
mental picture is satisfying. "Go forth, my
minions, and slay my oppressors! Hey, I said go
FORTH! What are you...? AAAUGH!"

Damn I'm twisted, but not as much as you
buggers. here's to many years of zombie
havoc, and issue 600!

Cheers,
Russ

**Issue 600?! FEH... I want to get to issue
1000... and we're going to make it there
too, right Charlie?!**

Of course, I've never written to a comic before.

"The Walking Dead #23: Fist Fight!" Yay! The
ubiquitous prison-movie punch-up! Fantastic!
But before we get to that, I've got to say
that #22 was a great issue. A slightly quieter
episode, with lots of checking up on our
survivors (I particularly like how you've been
developing Axel as a more sympathetic,
thoughtful character), and not one, but two big
splash page cliffhangers! Yikes! Top notch stuff,
as per usual.

All that said, I'm not sure what was going on on
page 21 with Rick putting his finger in Tyreese's
ear. Is that some kind of Crocodile Hunter-style
calming technique he learned during police
training?

I don't want Charlie coming round to punch me
in the face; the art was great as ever, it was just
a weird panel. Please don't hit me!

Kelvin Green

**That's what's called a "TANGENT" in the
comic world. Rick's not putting his finger
in Tyreese's ear... it just looks like his is, on**

**accident,
because of the way it was drawn.**

I thought it was funny.

Dear Letter Hacks

Pardon me for asking, but will WD40 be the
all action engine overhaul issue we've all been
longing for? Sorry, been a long, hard, difficult
week!

Cheers,
Jeff

For you man--I'll make sure that happens!!

Dear TWD,
Can't wait to see who kicks who's butt (like 1
handed Rick stands a chance). I'm also hoping
for a very slow "turn" of Allen.
Any new visitors coming soon?

Movies: Just saw Dead and Breakfast and Day
of the Dead 2: Contagium.

Dead and Breakfast is hilarious. It's as good as
Shaun of the Dead except not all the zombies
are slow and stupid, but the little tribute to
Thriller ("We're coming to kill ya, we're comin'
to kill ya") was hilarious.

Day of the Dead 2 was better than I expected. I
ended up liking it. In some parts the acting was
bad enough to ruin the suspension of disbelief,
but the story was written well enough to pull
you back.

I'd love to see an animated zombie series like
TWD. I think I've already mentioned that.
Are there any other horror-types you enjoy
(vampires, werewolves, maniacs, ghosts, etc.)?

Pretty much all of them really.

I think horror films are the best medium for
social commentary. Comedy seems to be the
second best. I believe it's because both can take
a social situation and present in an extreme and
entertain at the same time. Comments?

Is Charlie ever gonna get a crack at a cover? I
just think Tony needs to be completely phased
out (just kidding).

**Starting with this issue, it's Charlie on
covers full-time. REJOICE!**

Here's to hoping that the TWD television is
picked up by the time #100 hits the stands
(lifting a bottle of Killian's).

HERE, HERE!

Merl Key
Columbus, IN.

PS- In Indiana we don't even acknowledge
Buckeyes (people from Ohio), so I guess that
puts them even lower than Kentuckians, but I've
heard people in Michigan make fun of Hoosiers. I

wonder which states make fun of the others.

That would be Montana... the arrogant FUCKS.

Kirkman and friends:

Neil Strangeate's wife (Mrs. Strangeate) saw the cover of ish #22 and exclaimed "Omigod, it looks like a romance comic book for girls!" I told her she was exactly right. I summed it up:

"All this fucking-and-fighting soap opera drama is going down among this group of people, who just happen to be trapped in a big abandoned prison, which is constantly surrounded by hordes of moaning zombies."

I love flesh-eating hijinx and zombie shenanigans just as much as anybody, but what keeps me thinkin' about a WD ish for weeks after I've read it is the human drama. (And the artwork.) Ish 22, which featured absolutely no zombie action at all, barely even had zombies in it - just two panels featuring those creepy fence-huggers - was a stand-out, as far as drama, melodrama, whatever you wanta call it, is concerned. Inspector Leechcraft calls it "soap opera for boys." And we dig it the most.

Speaking of the Inspector, last week he was talkin' about TWD w/ his comic book guy over in Tulsa, and his guy told him, "O yeah, *everybody's* into that shit." Leechcraft sed the way his guy emphasized, "everybody," it made it sound like TWD was porn.

Speaking of porn, I can't wait for your fence-huggers to get ass-raped by the aliens in #100. Thanx again, dudes.

The Right Revered Potere O. Occulto III

Right on... or something.

Oh, Great Bearded One,

Have time to kill, and decided to ask a few silly questions regarding the series and whatnot. First let me thank you. We briefly chatted at Wizard World Chicago, and you were one of the nicest guys. You seem to love the medium and not just use it for a movie, television, video game, etc stepping stone. Cheers for that.

On to the silly questions:

1. Will we ever see zombies in costumes? Like a guy that had that crappy dress-as-a-chicken to give out coupons job.

That's the one thing I really HATE about Romero movies... those zombies take me out of the story. I mean... if everyone turned into zombies overnight, the percentage of cheerleaders, clowns and what not would be SO SMALL that we'd never see them... yet he ALWAYS focuses on those zombies.

2. Will there be zombie animals? Zombie porcupines?

No animals... that's a rule.

3. What's up with all of the folks complaining about the WD HC cost on your board? Slap those bitches

into line! These are the same folks'll shell out money for a variant, but won't buy this quality collection.

\$100 is a lot of money for a book, I understand their complaints. But it's a HUGE book and costs a lot. I hope people don't think I'm actually making a mint of the thing... I'm not.

4. Will we ever see a zombie Wal-Mart in WD? (see TM's sketchbook)

Dale and Andrea DID talk about going to a Wal-Mart or something...

5. I really want a sketch that can only be made by the great Tony Moore. George W. Bush riding the bomb ala Dr. Strangelove. What sexual favors did you offer Tony to get 'em to do the first few issues of WD?

Nothing I don't already regret, that's for sure. That man is hung like a can of Pringles.

6. Please don't ever, ever reveal what made the zombies. Please?

Not planning on it.

7. Regarding Invincible, can beards grow in space?

That's where they grow BEST!

8. What are your thoughts regarding your own work after it sees print? Do you not view it? - Woody Allen, Or go over it again to see what you've missed and may include in the future?

Just by the nature of this (and Invincible) being a continuing series I have to from time to time sit down and read every issue. That way I can make sure everything jives. I'm not sitting around reading my stuff because I enjoy it but I'm certainly not one of those people who can't view their own work.

Thanks, Robert. WD and Invincible are two of the best chracter-driven books out on the market. I'm turning more and more people on to them every day. But as I said before - the good dialogue, round characters, and writing really sells the books. I just push it infront of people.

**A fan and a pusher.
Andrew Rosenbarger**

Round characters? I just write what I KNOW!

And that'll do it for this letters column. I'll see you

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to Walking Dead 26. Big stuff is on the horizon, folks. The next few issues will set the stage for the next couple years of this book. Big, BIG stuff... so pay attention.

Charlie and Cliff are doing a bang-up job on interiors and now covers as well. Looking sharp, fellas. Just wanted to get them a shout out. Young mister Rathburn is also doing a great job on back covers, which he'll be handling for the next bit of issues at least.

Now, lets answer some mail.

Hey Kirkman,

Merl Key and I both shop at Comic Cave in Columbus. He's gotten like four letters printed in Walking Dead so far; I only have one. Therefore, in a pathetic attempt to try to make up some ground on his record, I am going to send you two letters this time around. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but you gotta give me credit for the originality. It's better than the typical "OMG when is Rick gonna die, [insert lame joke about Cho's Zombie King here]" kind of letter. If you don't have room to print both, feel free to substitute one of mine for Merl's. BRB.

--Sam Kirkland

I can't believe I'm printing this.

Hi again Kirkman,

I'm still loving the book! #23 was amazing as usual. Very brutal. You'll also be pleased to know that I ordered the HC even though I have most of the issues and TPBs already. I can't wait for the Omnibus.

I gotta give a shout-out to Mike at Comic Cave for forcing me to buy the first WD TPB. Usually I can resist his pleas for me to buy something, but on that life-changing day I couldn't. Thanks Mike!

Really loving Invincible; that MTU issue was superb. And to all you readers out there: be sure to check out my reviews at HeroRealm.com (shameless plug!). Our Best of 2005 column in 'Lowdown &

Dirty' should be up over the holidays, and I have a sneaking suspicion that a Kirkman book will be there.

And I almost forgot: someone the other day actually mistook my name for "Kirkman" and I had to tell them, "no, it's not like the superhero. It's KirkLAND, like the country."

That was a joke, BTW. Kirkland is still a much better name.

Don't ever stop writing this book!

--Sam Kirkland

I beg to differ. Kirkland always sounded funny to me growing up. When people would mistake my last name for "Kirkland" I would think: "is that a real name?" So in closing... you are the one with the lame name. Mine is totally sweet.

Dear Kirkman,

Now normally I complain about issue long fights (Bendis, Liefeld, etc), but issue 23 rocked. Very much like a real fight, ending with both combatants on the ground, exhausted and hurt. When I got the issue, I turned right to the letter's column and saw the last page of the book. It looks like (if you didn't see the preceding page) Rick shot himself in the head. Oh, and thanks for killing Allen.

1. Are you the one that comes up with the words representing sounds? WHUD! WRAMM! And my favorite, THOOM! Those are great.

I come up with them, but most of them are old comic book stand-bys... it's not like I invented them. Although, I think I'm the only person to ever use "Brakka-rakka-thakka-dakka-doom!" Which was over in Invincible or Brit. I like sound effects.

2. Do you think that Dr Logan and Bub are still out there together somewhere?

Different universe... and I don't own those

guys. Dead Dog Comics is doing a Day of the Dead book with BUB in it. So if you're curious as to what's going on with that guy--give it a look.

3. When will we see a city again? That's the best stuff. Abandoned military equipment, papers blowing through the streets declaring "The Dead Walk!", and all that delicious carnage you want to see in a zombie film.

I too am anxious to get back to a city with the story... so we'll see one sooner or later.

4. OK, besides Romero's stuff, what are some of your favorite Zombie films? Ever see Plague of the Zombies? Did you hate Resident Evil 2 too?

I'm way to smitten with Mila Jovovich to ever hate anything she was in. Was Resident Evil 2 silly? Maybe a little bit... but I loved every minute of it. Never seen Plague of the Zombies. As far as other non-Romero zombie flicks... you've all got to go find a copy of "STACY" it's an Asian zombie movie that is about the most bizarre zombie flick I've ever seen. Not great, actually, not even good, but it's gory as all heck and it's just bizarre. I should probably publicly thank Mark Englert for turning me on to that... and for turning me on in general.

5. Where are all the themed zombies? Who know, the clowns, bikers, etc? Lately it's just slightly obscured or shade-like figures in the background. Another reason to get out of the prison. Or, let zombies in...

Personally I always hated the clown, Santa, cheerleader zombies in all the Romero flicks. I mean, they'd be there, sure... but what are the odds? If everyone in my neighborhood suddenly turned into zombies and starting walking out of their houses... they'd be in normal every day clothes, at least 95% of them would be. The other 5% would be naked. Like me.

So the Invincible and Spidey team-up in MTU was great! I'd write to that book, but you aren't printing letters in it... I can't freakin wait until Marvel Zombies. I think I said something about it in another letter, but I can't remember those things. Then they get printed late and I'm askin about Land of the Dead or something after you've talked about it over and over. I can't complain though, these issues are coming out quick again. Thanks for killing Allen. Didn't even give that guy a chance to get his zombie close-up. Good job!

THOOM!
Chris Pitts

Glad you're digging this stuff, Chris.

Yo, Kirkman,

Just got issue 23 today. It was great, but not the best thus far I have to say. Almost every issue

until now has been better than the one before it, but I have to say 22 topped the all out rick/tyreese brawl. The issue was still brilliant, just not more brilliant than the one before it.

I also noticed the two page spread formed by the last page of 22 and the first page of 23. It was a great touch by Kirkman (I assume it was his idea) and an even better job on the art by Charlie and Cliff. It's kinda nice to think it will be a straight up two page spread with no covers or letter pages or anything in between when the trade comes out, but I also like that you need to buy both singles to see the whole image.

It was my idea, but it's only fair to point out that I get it from Erik Larsen. He did it in-between Savage Dragon 30 and 31. I think he was the first to ever do that.

On another note, thank you for killing Allen (even after you said not to count him out just yet last issue-- you bastard!). I was hoping you would make that move, because if he lived, the characters would assume that cutting off his leg healed him, and go around cutting off limbs every time they got bit. This would give them an easy way out if they got bitten, and almost no one would die of zombie bites, which could get boring.

And Charlie, I especially liked the panel where Rick falls over the railing in the prison and Tyreese just misses grabbing him. This was the best panel in the issue in my opinion. It was really dramatic and very realistic. Let's not forget the rest of the team either- Cliff is doing an amazing job, as usual (where do you find these guys, Kirkman?), and good ol' Rus really makes the word bubbles pop off the page.

I find them the same place everyone else finds them. The bus station.

Now for questions. I know you love those.

1. Rick is gonna be okay, right? At least physically if not mentally? I mean, his hand is already beat to crap, give him a break.

I might.

2. Why the hell was Glenn just standing there the whole issue telling them to stop but not doing anything about it?

He's a little guy--he's not about to get in-between them. He doesn't want to get his ass handed to him in front of his girl. Who does?

3. I know, I know. The covers represent an idea, not what actually happens. still, it bugs me that you showed Tyreese beat up on the cover when Rick was the one who really got his ass whooped. Why no Rick on the cover?

Rick is on all the covers, just about. And he was pretty big on the cover to 24. So if he had been on the cover to 23 also, it would have looked weird. I'm keeping Rick off covers for a while.

4. Alright, it's long enough already. When is the freakin' baby gonna be born?

Lori is six or seven months pregnant right now (I'd have to look in the issue to be sure). So we're two or three months off, book time, not real time. It will be SOON, that's all I'll say.

5. Will we ever find out who Michonne was talking to in 21?

Of course.

6. Why do the characters seem to be ignoring the mass zombie problem? They already have a good system to kill them- if they just killed ten a day or something they would be okay.

It's been discussed in the book, cleaning off the fence and such. It'll be easier now that they have the suits. They've been busy. Give them time.

7. Why is Patricia getting it so easy? Rick has punished all the other wrongdoers severely. Is it because she's a girl?

It's more because there isn't really a point. What could you possibly do to punish these people?

Okay, I'm done now. Thanks for putting out a great comic every month (I give you credit for trying) and keeping me going back to the comic shop for more. Long after the aliens hit the scene, I'll be kissing your ass in letters like this.

Jackson Buckley

Man, it's going to be totally cool when there're aliens in this book. I've been doing all kinds of research.

Dear Robert Kirkman and amazing others involved in this comic,

All I can say after reading these past issues 21, 23 and 24 is WOW and SEXY!! I think that they have been the best comics I have ever read. I do have a few questions so here they are:

1. How many times have Glenn and Maggie well, done it in the past 10 issues? (joking but you can answer)

Hell, I can't keep track. I hope they're being CAREFUL.

2. What is this whole thing with Michonne and Tyreese. They knew each other before? Are their names rhyming on purpose?

Their names don't rhyme. Michonne is pronounced "ME-SHAWN" and Tyreese is pronounced "TY-REESE." They didn't know each other before. Michonne knew who he WAS, but didn't know him.

3. Is Lori gonna have that goddamn baby yet?

Soon.

4. Who's baby is it? Can it be a zombie baby?

I guess it COULD be. You'll just have to read the book.

5. When will there be another new character coming in?

Next issue. A few of them.

Those are my questions. Now for my compliments. This comic is so fucking amazing. I just can never and never want to put them down. They were the first comic books I've ever read and wow, the best ever. I am a die-hard zombie fan and it's another thing to add to my collection.

Thanks!!!

P.S. Please print this!!! It's my first time ever writing!!

Sign your name next time!

Dear Robert

RE: Issue #23

Jesus Fuck. Even by TWD standards, that shook things up. Rarely does a comic leave you feeling slightly out of breath, but the pace of this one left me exhausted.

Not as knackered as Rick, though. He's not a well guy.

Can't wait for the next one. Fortnight, you say? Great.

Every other bugger is plugging their favorite comics shop, so here's a mention for Gosh! in London, where this week one of the staff, when asked what was out, kept plugging 'a great issue of The Walking Dead'.

He wasn't wrong.

Regards,
Mark Clapham

Tell everyone at GOSH! I said thanks.

Hi, Kirkman, just wanted to vent a little.

After the angry words come out I'll stop hating everyone and think of puppies and kitties again.

1. Jake Reedy, what the hell do you mean that the ZOMBIES in 28 Days Later weren't zombies? Webster says that a zombie, in addition to the couple of definitions Chris Pitt wrote in issue 23, is "one who looks or behaves like an automaton." For the record, it's also "a tall drink made of various rums, liqueur, and fruit juice." If you want to know how to make one, pick up the latest release of Night of the Living Dead on DVD, the one with the original black and white version (preferred) AND the relatively decent color version. It has a commentary track by Mike Nelson (from Mystery Science Theater 3000), which is hilarious. Anyway, that first definition clearly proves that the infected in 28

Days are zombies, unless you don't know what an automaton is. Look that up yourself. 28 Days was a very

innovative ZOMBIE movie, and it kicked ass for bringing new ideas to the table. It's people like you that probably think Dead Alive sucks, too. God, you make me need a cigarette, and I just quit smoking. That's better. Sweet, sweet cancer death... Anyway, yeah, Webster also said "Whatchoo talkin' bout, Willis?" I'd listen to him, if I were you.

I think he just meant they weren't traditional Romero zombies.

2. Don't you be ripping on the cover of issue 22, Clyde in NJ. So it gave something away. So what? After almost 2 years of awesome and often misleading covers, you're gonna give the Kirk-man shit for using one that wasn't misleading at all? He writes it! He can do whatever he wants with it. If he wants the next 20 issues to be about all the survivors drinking tea and discussing politics while simultaneously ramming hot steel pokers up each others' asses, it's his right. I mean, it would probably stop selling real quick (or not, Carol's got a sweet ass), but he can if he wants.

No shit. I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't. By the way, How did you see me plots for the next 20 issues?

3. Now that Carol and Tyreese probably aren't together anymore, can I marry her?

If you find a machine that can transform your matter into my imagination and Charlie's ink lines, maybe... but seriously... it wouldn't be worth it. There are ZOMBIES in this comic.

4. Forget what I said a few issues ago about killing Rick and putting Tyreese in charge. Upon closer examination, I have decided that they are both too insane to lead, and Hershel should be in charge. The guy has done nothing but eat shit sandwiches for the entire series, why not do something good for him?

I think I've heard this about ALL the characters at least once. Sorry, I hate each and every one of these made-up people.

5. Okay, Carol is still alive, apparently, so this question doesn't really matter, but while she was lying there, supposedly bleeding to death, it looked like everyone just took off and left Sophia alone with her, unsupervised and unarmed. DID NO ONE ELSE NOTICE THIS?! DID THE SURVIVORS NOT THINK ABOUT THE STUPIDITY OF THAT FOR EVEN A SECOND?! I mean, what if Carol HAD died, and came back as a zombie, and attacked Sophia? While it would have been sick and twisted as all hell (I'm almost surprised you DIDN'T do it, what with you're obvious hatred for little kids and all), and interesting to read ("Oh, mommy, you're okay after all! Yay! Why don't you say anything? Why are you ripping my vital organs from my torso? Why are you..."Chomp, chomp..."), why would Lori of all people let that happen? But Carol didn't die.

Thank god for

that, huh? Actually, I think one of the five-thousand characters in this book was keeping an eye on Sophia. Maybe Hershel's son, Billy. He never really does much.

6. About berating Jake and Clyde earlier, sorry about that guys. Just had to get that out. I don't hate you or anything. You read this book, which means you're both bad-ass. I'm sorry I said those things, baby, it's just... I get so lonely sometimes, and scared, y'know? Come on back to Ike, baby. I promise I'll be better this time. Let's sing Proud Mary, like in the old days...

Okay, that's all. Keep up the good work, ye gods of zombieness.

Kicking ass for the lord,
Dan Haskell,

You had so much more conviction before you wussed out and apologized for no damn reason. I'm ashamed.

Rick has got to be getting sicker from his chest wound in issue one! Tyreese knocking him around probably isn't helping much! I am all for the police copter from Dawn of the Dead landing at the prison! Have you seen Undead? More like Unwatchable! Now I understand the whole bit about the alien landing jokes in the letters page because of Undead!

Actually, I think those started before I saw Undead. Also, they're certainly not a way of making fun of that movie. I LOVED that movie. It's got some really cool stuff in it.

Land of the Dead dvd is cool, especially with the extra about Shaun of the Dead meeting George Romero. Why don't you cameo in a zombie movie?

I applied but they never called me back. I think it's my prison time.

When is the script book coming out? I appreciate everyone's work on catching the comic up to schedule---when the hell do you have time to sleep? Loved Invincible/Spider-Man in Team-Up! I cannot wait for the rest of the story in Invincible! Will Rick cameo in your Marvel zombie book? Love your work and thanks again for the good reading material!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

The script book is in stores now. Rick will not be appearing in Marvel Zombies. Thanks for the kind words, Bobby.

Robert,
I am looking forward to seeing you at San Diego Comic Con next year. :) Just read issue 23 of WD and thought it was the best one yet!!! A couple comments/questions:

1. Any thoughts on Showtime's Masters Of Horror?

I'll be buying the DVD. I don't have Showtime.

2. Any thoughts on the new Horror Channel (which I believe was supposed to launch on October 31st

and air UNCUT films but was delayed for "technical reasons.")

If I got it, I'd watch it like the dickens.

3. I am EXTREMELY excited about Tony Moore drawing Vertigo's The Exterminators.

Peace.
Andrew Rootz Chesterfield Missouri

Me too! I can't wait to read that book.

Letter Hacks,

So I was reading the Walking Dead thread on Comic Book Resources a little bit ago, and a user was commenting on how he thinks the book has been neglecting the zombie aspect of this zombie book for the last several issues. Then something dawned on me.

The zombies have become sort of a non-issue in the comic as of late. Yeah, the story's always been about the people who survived the zombie apocalypse and not the zombies, but the zombies were always there. Until the people moved into the prison, at which point Rick and company pretty much stopped thinking about the zombies because they were all trapped on the outside of the fence. And that's why the book hasn't had much zombie action. We as readers are starting to become a little too comfortable with a horde of zombies outside of a chain link fence because the characters are doing just the same. The absence of the zombie problem from the book is symbolic of the absence of the zombie problem from the minds of the characters. A bonafide literary device in a comic book? Tell me it isn't true!

And of course, we all know what happens when the survivors of a zombie apocalypse start to ignore the problem...

Holy smokes! You'd think I'd planned all this from the beginning. (wink)

Issue #23 was great as usual, but I do have a suggestion that would help me (and I'm sure some other readers) out a bit when digging into a new issue. The story always transitions pretty seamlessly from one issue to the next. I remember when I was reading the first trade I had no clue where one issue started and the next ended. No definitive end to the action in the previous issue means it takes me a bit to remember exactly where the last issue left off, especially when it was six weeks ago or more. Maybe you could put a "Previously In..." page at the beginning of each issue, as a replacement for the character guide at the end of each issue (which really doesn't need to be every issue anyway). Even just a smaller version of the last page of the previous issue, along with a few mugshots of the characters that'll be showing up in the issue would be great. You don't need to go into a long explanation of everything that's happened in the series like Marvel always feels the need to do, but a short recap would be appreciated. I'm sure new readers would appreciate that as well, instead of just starting with a page of Tyreese punching Rick in the face for some reason.

Hm. I think I'll start doing that with this issue. Good idea.

BTW, the Invincible/Spider-Man MTU was one of my favorite comics of the year. Doesn't seem worth writing to the Invincible or MTU letters page just to tell you that, but it had me rolling with laughter all the way through. Great job, man.

Aaron Stege

That's cool. It appears this letters column is the place to talk about that book anyway. Hey, if Brian can talk about Avengers in Powers I can talk about Team-Up here. Although, we all know he does that because he doesn't have enough mail to fill up that letters column. The hack.

Dear TWD,
Great issue. However, I found myself more intrigued by the side stories (Allen dying and Carol living) than the whole fight and subsequent fainting. It will be very interesting now to see where Rick and Tyreese's relationship goes from here.

The overall story looks very much like the story of Rick Grimes and his slow, but eventual, "turn to the dark side". I hope it is. But then again I'm even more excited by the cover of #25! In most zombie-apocalypse stories the remnants of government seem to be worse than the plague itself. I'm hoping for something different (like what I keep hinting at, the "turn" of Rick, though I will not be surprised if the "military" takes over the prison, and at first seem "evil") and that this might take us into a larger epic struggle of survival for all of mankind. It will be interesting, again, to see how Rick interprets his responsibility to the group when others arrive who are equally capable, if not more so, of protecting them.

One constructive criticism, I'm not all for the big list of characters at the end of the book. You're selling bi-annual TPBs (plus the upcoming hard-cover) so any reader can catch up on all that information much easier than comic-fans could in the past. It was great the first time I saw it, but with each issue I'm liking it less and less.

I would rather see that space dedicated to either Team TWD (specifically regarding TWD) or fan-art, upcoming script previews for TWD, previews of other work by Robert and Team TWD, or a detailed background of an individual character. This is just some random items flung against the wall.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

Thanks for the kind words, Merl. I'll think of something on the character bios. For now, though... they're no in this issue.

Kirkman,

I just read issue 23, and I think it may be your best yet! Not a zombie in sight, but still lots of great action! The fight between Rick and Ty was great. The cover set it up very well, and the first page was a great way to start. It'll be interesting to see

how the rest of the group reacts to the info that came out during the fight (i.e. Ty killing Chris and Rick killing Dex). This one fight might open the door to many more. Glenn and Maggie running around naked during the fight was pretty amusing too...

Carol surviving her attempted suicide should be very interesting. How will she explain it to everyone else? Will they try to help her or look down on her for trying to take the "easy" way out (while potentially endangering everyone else in the prison when she turned if no one knew she was dead). ? Will they take it out on the new girl, Michonne? All interesting possibilities that I can't wait to see unfold!

I'm surprised to see Allen die so soon. I thought you'd drag this out a little longer so we'd get to see his reaction to Rick trying to save him. I also expected him to live so the group would learn that zombie bites don't kill if treated properly... Apparently, that's not the case though.

I don't know... Allen did lose a lot of blood...

I'm not quite sure what happened with Rick on the last page. Did he just collapse after the beating he took? Did it have anything to do with him shooting Allen? I guess we'll find out next issue...

He collapsed after the fight. The smoking gun is a little misleading.

Glad to hear there's going to be a poster soon. Any word on what that poster will be? Is it going to be one of the covers or something brand new? Or are you going to keep us in suspense by refusing to tell us?

Don't I always choose suspense?

Really looking forward to the next issue. I hope the fact that the aliens are now involved doesn't detract from the book... I really don't know why you revealed Michonne's alien ties in the letters page though. That just seems like bad writing to me...

Have I ever been accused of anything less?

Thanks for all your hard work!

Jim Amato

PS - When are we going to get to see the zombies play volleyball?

Next issue.

Kirkman and Co,

Just wanted to tell everyone involved that you are doing a great job! I have never been this excited about a series... well... EVER. Every month (or more-that was a jab at you Kirkman-) I head to my local comic shop (Chris's Comics in Marshfield, MA) and run home to get my latest surprise-filled

issue.

I just finished issue #21 and I just have to comment on the Letter Hacks talk of staying at the prison or roaming aimlessly. I do think you could spend a lot of time at the prison there is just sooo much you can do with it. I could see the group finally leaving after an extreme event takes place (but at the rate bodies are dropping that would be hard to pull off). Ok now that I am done sucking your balls, I have a few questions: Will we ever see and zombie animals? RE has zombie dogs but I am thinking about zombie gorillas, elephants, or even lamas.

I've said no zombie animals before... but I hadn't thought about zombie Gorillas yet...

That would just be strange scene if the group came across a Zoo in there travels. Is there an address I could mail an issue and have you sign to me?

Sorry, I just don't have the time to do this. I wish I could.

I don't know if you have been asked this yet so bare with me. I would be willing to pay a fee or whatever but it would just be a great thing to have. Please, for the love of the undead give me an address! Also, please do NOT write the address of an asylum under this question.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone. Well, until the undead tear through my face like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper - make mine Kirkman!

-Andy Cooper

Like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper? Sheesh!

Firstly, this will be my 1st comic write-in so get happy. punisher, ghost rider, cyberforce, team 7/ wetworks didn't warrant it, however, your comic has enough motivation for me now...that and a long ass doldrum on and otherwise slow Sunday night. So, long story short, the work you have put out is exceptional, well thought out, and most of all, inspired. SOME POINTS OF ORDER

1. Ever since I was 11 there have been a series of nightmares where zombies and similar imagery perpetuates. This is largely due to an episode one halloween where I watched "night of the living dead" alone, hopped up on sugar, in an old/creaky house with a lot of people wandering the streets at night, etc. etc. Now, at 29, they still persist however due to the advent of a certain psychedelic encounter, otherwise known as freshman year, I can now dream lucidly. Sometimes I get away, sometimes I get nipped, and so forth. Well, I took some initiative during psych and to be brief, they are a metaphor for anxiety concerning time (thanks dr. torrello). Zombies never tire, always pursue, and yada yada yada. This makes for good writing but restless sleep.

2. You've made a very believable microcosm. All zombie films work on this premise, but yours seems feasible. Wanna' say gothic-horror "Moby Dick", but it's more contemporary and believable.

More contemporary than "Moby Dick?" The hell you say!

The problems therein aren't so cliché. The characters react on a very un-comicbook manner, more adult and complex, so again, well done. Rick in particular is an excellent study. He's the glue, but very few of his "crew" seem to appreciate that he's saved their lives many times over. But they crucify him when something goes wrong. #23 Tyresse is way out of line to be blunt. I would've thought he'd be more unhinged after his daughter and all that though. Glenn/Maggie seem very believable however.

Thanks.

3. The story's sine wave of action/dialogue has pissed off some readers, but it can't be all combat all the time.

I agree.

4. WTF is up with Diamond? I can't get #21 for the life of me and they are unreliable at best. Thoughts?

Well, the issues sell out pretty quickly after they come out. I'd recommend preordering them at your local comic shop.

5. will the origin of the zombie blight be exposed?

No plans.

6. A lot of people talking about a TV series. Such a good idea in terms of budget/acting. a horror-esque Lost? You going to jump on that or what?

Pretty much out of my hands. I'd certainly love for there to be one.

7. Your realism is incredible. ex) frozen zombies in the sub development. Very imaginative. The scene where the snow falls off the gate to reveal the sign was a masterpiece of suspension as well. classy...

Thanks.

8. lastly (pressed for time and must go), are they going to make probing raids out of the prison to find more survivors, kill zombies?

Maybe. I don't want to give things away.

Many many thanks and much respect,
Jeff Thompson ("taking it slow" and all that)

Thanks for the letter, Jeff.

Mr. Kirkman,
Thanks for the great comic. After reading the letters section in issue #22 with all of the zombie related questions an unasked question came to my somewhat warped mind: Do the undead who eat the living move their bowels?

Inquiring minds want to know.
Marc Cawiezel

That is currently unknown. It has to go

SOMEWHERE

though... but I would guess their bodies aren't working well enough for any kind of digestion to occur. Just for the sake of whatever... I'm just going to assume their bodies are so toxic they dissolve whatever they eat. Another thing is that most zombies really aren't getting to eat that much in their lifespan. A chunk here, a chunk there.

It's not like they're constantly eating after the initial craziness.

Hey,
Walking Dead has officially become Loitering Snooze. Dance with who brought you... zombies...remember? Soap operatic tripe may have its place, but hardly in a medium with the visual potential of comics. So much promise squandered so abruptly.
Blecch!

-Joe

There will be plenty of action and gore to keep the manly men happy. Stick with it. If you'll excuse me, now... I've got a bear to kill.

I think this is the time when people stop talking about how great this awesome new comic book is and start wondering when it'll jump the shark. (Or have they already? I usually only gloss over the vast, endless letters page each issue contains) Anyways, not yet. At least in my book.

I'm sure a couple of people have complained about the lack of zombies in the past couple of issues. That doesn't bug me much. Walking Dead always seemed more focused on the characters and how they changed and adapted and grew in a world infested by undead cannibals. The long stretch in the prison illustrates this with more conviction than the rest of the title's lifespan so far.

The stint in the prison is a good example of the "let's hole ourselves up while the hungry zombies fester outside" aspect of most zombie cinema. In retrospect, I'm surprised "abandoned prison" wasn't used before "shopping mall", "military base", "fortified city", or "police station" were. It seems so obvious now, which is a trademark of good writing.

I'm glad this seems to be the end of that and the beginning of something new though. The prison train took you about as far as it could go and it's cool that some federals will be making their way to the book. I knew you were going to do that the second Rick began his big speech about how nobody was coming. Of course, the "big speech" is an old horror movie cliché, but your execution of it made it seem more like an homage than a retread back to the well.

The art is still solid. Sometimes the characters are hard to distinguish from each other, which was never the case when Tony Moore was on the job. Still, Adlard and Rathburn are growing as artists. I really like their experimentation with graywash in this issue. The tones have never looked better.

Anyways, great work. This is your most fervently

loved
comic book series for a reason.

Sputnik Jones

Thanks for the kind words, Sputnik.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I really enjoy your working on The Walking Dead, Marvel Team-Up, Marvel Knights 2099 and your arc

on Captain America. I love how you, like Romero, focus on more of the human side of the zombie stories than just the blood and gore that comes from killing zombies. With that said here are a few questions:

1: We all got to read the Invincible issue of Marvel Team-Up. Which leads me to this: So when is Rick going to show up in Marvel Team-Up and kill zombie with Spider-Man?

Issue 27, most likely.

2: All joking aside now, after reading the "Crossover" arc in Ultimate FF by Mark Millar and Greg Land, I saw that you are writing "Marvel Zombies" and Sean Phillips is doing the art. I am now highly anticipating this mini-series knowing your approach on zombies and knowing that Sean Phillips will deliver with his art. How much did you enjoy doing the mini and are you jealous that Millar came up with the idea first?

I had a blast working on the book. Sean Phillips is a great artist and Arthur Suydam's covers are reason enough to be the book.

3: What's your favorite zombie flick? Mine is the extended cut of Romero's Dawn of the Dead.

I still haven't watched that... I've still got that DVD sitting on my shelf.

And finally:

4: Have you seen Peter Jackson's "Dead Alive"? If not, you must get your hands on it now. The movie is the goriest I've ever seen and it's so over the top, it make me laugh so hard and just say, "That isn't right."

My dad made Tony Moore and I watch Dead Alive when we were in 8th grade. It changed our lives.

Keep up the good work and I can't wait to read where you take us with the new direction with issue 25.

Dale Varley

You and me both, Dale!

It was recently brought to my attention that I might not be making you smooth cats as away of my other books as possible. So in an effort to do that I'll be swiping Bendis' style (yeah, again) and running a handy dandy list at the end of these letters columns. Enjoy!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! THE PACT #4 is in stores NOW and has been for a few weeks now. It's written by me, drawn by Jason Howard and features the return of a certain villain from this very book. You don't have to have read issues 1-3 to understand the issue. It's a lot of fun.

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! THE WALKING DEAD keeps going strong, if you like horror or people talking, or horrific things happening to people who talk, you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 26 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag with a worthless colorist. Issue 5 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by aforementioned worthless colorist Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a second printing and issue 3 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN.

I think that's all for now.

I'll see you guys back here next month, or earlier. Until then, keep it REAL.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Christ.

In the proofreading stage it was brought to my attention that I'm possibly going to catch hell over this Zombie Arena Fighting since there was that cage fight in Land of the Dead. Once again, I've got to play the "I had this planned before hand" card--which I'll admit is totally lame. All I can really say is that this will be more along the lines of Roman Gladiator Arena fights than Small Underground Bar Cage Fighting. And in the end... it will be as vastly different from that brief scene in Land of the Dead as this entire book has been from 28 Days Later.

We've got big stuff coming up--so stay tuned.

Also, I just wanted to give you guys a heads up. Sculptor Extraordinaire CLAYBURN MOORE has signed on to do a WALKING DEAD STATUE. That's right kids, we've got one on the horizon. I'm totally excited. I'll keep you guys posted and you'll see pictures here as soon as we've got them to show.

Let's get this show on the road and answer some letters!

Mr. Kirkman,
Hi, you possibly may remember me.
I had the pleasure of meeting you at a Boston Comic Con.(there was an S&M Con next door...Woo Hoo!) My best bud (and alternate reality life-partner) Jon Hernandez took a picture of you and me together. (you were rubbing my freshly buzzed head). The picture is framed and proudly displayed in my living room. Jon was the guy with the totally out of control beard and I bought a Metal Men comic for you because of a story you related about your youth. Anyway, enough memory triggers.

Metal Man comic... I was lost before but now I've got it.

It's cliched, but in the 37 years (yeah...37) I've been reading/collecting comics, I've never written in before. I'm a zombie fanatic from WAY back. My buddies and I snuck into the original Dawn of the Dead back in '78 and my life was FOREVER changed. For a while I had "zombie plague" nightmares that would wake me in the middle of the night. I don't have them anymore but when I have time to kill and my mind wanders, I STILL think about what I would do if it happened.

What actually prompted me to write was I overheard my teenaged sons and their friends talking about

what they're going to do WHEN it happens. They were arguing about who would be the leader. My 19 year old seems to be the alpha male. They have a plan in place concerning where they will initially meet and where they will go! I got such a kick out of this because it's exactly how I thought at their age. (aaaahhh sweet imagination) This particular genre seems to affect fans so profoundly.

Anyway, onto The Walking Dead #24. The book continues to surprise and entertain. The "blow out" between Rick and Tyreese in issue #23 was unexpected but made sense. I've suspected all along that the title Walking Dead referred more to the survivors than the zombies. Wasn't Rick's right hand messed up pretty badly when he beat Thomas near to death? I've been expecting some sort of repercussions from that. Infections possibly prompting amputation? I guess the damage wasn't as extensive as it initially appeared.

It healed up cleanly because of the bandaging and what not. He's still got some damage too it--his grip is really weak. We'll be seeing more of this as time goes on. I'm not going to forget.

Oh, just saw the ad for the Deluxe HC. Looks AWESOME. Are the signed and numbered editions going to be available in limited quantities at various comic shops or will they need to be special ordered?

Fanatic for life..
Bob Dore

As you can see some of this mail is old. The hardcover has come out and the signed and numbered edition was limited to 150. Some people that special ordered it didn't even get a copy. Which is a shame. I really feel bad about that... but that's the nature of limited stuff. In other news, we've got a NEW Walking Dead hardcover on the way. This one will be a little more affordable, at \$34.95 and will contain issues 1-12. It'll be on sale in July. And NO I'm not abandoning the deluxe hardcover format, there will still be a volume two deluxe book around the time that issue 48 comes out. These smaller hardcovers will have less stuff for less money and won't be limited like the deluxe one. These smaller hardcovers will be more like the Invincible Ultimate Collection.

Dear Kirk-man,(that's your superhero name)
Just read the walking Dead #24, and i felt inspired to write. The walking dead #24 was a good read for a number of reasons.

1) It seems to me that the entire issue took place in the span of, like, ten minutes. I really liked the pacing. It makes it seem like something really big is about to happen. No zombie action, but there is an impending doom that seems to be hovering about. Those shots of the zombies at the fence are good fore-shadowing. I can almost hear that fence crashing down at any second...

2) Another damn good cover. Rick has lost it. The somber blue color scheme was a good comparison to the insanity in Rick's eyes. It summoned a conflicting feeling about Rick and his sanity; which is exactly what this issue was about. I still side with Rick, and see everything he has done thus far as being pretty rational for the circumstances he has been thrust into. Maybe other readers see him as having gone a little off the deep end, but so far I have agreed with his decisions.

3) Interesting that the governing comittee would have an even number of members. A 2 against 2 vote will surely come up at some point, so I am curious why you chose an even number for leadership.

I figured it'd be best if all important decisions required a unanimous vote. They won't be voting on every little thing--just the big stuff.

4) I generally think that double-page spreads are complete B.S., but this one was very powerful. A nice finale for the hardback's final pages. "We are the walking dead!" It makes perfect sense, and it's something that has never crossed my mind. The title isn't about the zombies anymore than the story is. The story is about the lives and survival of the main cast. They are the walking dead because of the inevitability of their situation. That was a very classic moment.

It's time for a few questions.

1) Do the first 24 issues all take place on Earth-1, or Earth-2? What Earth are we on? Will there be 6 mini series focusing on minute aspects of your plot that I can read while waiting on major plot points to be explored? "Infinite Dead"? "The Dead/Human war"? "The Walking Dead Project"? "The Dead United"? I really like to feel like I am being suckered into spending lots of money to get a full story, so I hope you are plannig some pretty big summer events.

How did you get a look at the upcoming schedule?! CRAP.

2) If it became a question of the series being able to continue and be profitable, would having more ads be an alternative to cancellation? I am a bit un-clear as to how the system works at image. The latest issue had zero non-walking dead ads (Thank you!!!!), so I am a little curious how that affects the profitability of the ook. I just counted the number of ads in the latest issue of Uncanny X-men (27 ad pages vs 24 story pages. It almost seems unbelievable), and I could not believe how many ads I had to suffer through in one comic. In your book there are zero ads breaking up the story. I think that's great, but I am curious about how that works.

This book survives on profits from the sale of the actual book alone. We don't sell ads. If we did I'd never put them in the middle of the story.

I've always liked how Image books never did that. Although, I gotta say... I don't even NOTICE them when I read books from Marvel and DC.

3) You're right. The "Savage Dragon" is the cat's pajamas. I wish that it would come out sometime. I'm sure that being the president is swell and all, but I miss the "Savage Dragon". Maybe you could threaten to punch him in the neck if he doesn't have a new issue out soon. I saw your rather intimidating picture in the Wizard top ten writers, and I am sure he would respond to any threats you might make. Speaking of which...

Thanks for the heads up. I threatened to punch Erik Larsen in the neck and he put issue 122 of Savage Dragon out in January. If I'm not mistaken, issue 123 will be out by the time this issue is out. I've even seen pages from 124. If I didn't know better--I'd say the old man was doing a monthly book.

4) Are you still expecting that pecan pie that I promised in the last letter? Judging from that pic in wizard I would say that you have had enough pie. OH, SNAP! You were just schooled. Don't hate.

Am I really that FAT? Fuck all you people.

5) I bought all those 2099 one-shots you did for Marvel. I dug all of them! Any plans for follow-ups?

I'm following up on them in the current LEAGUE OF LOSERS arc in Marvel Team-Up 15-18. Mutant 2099 makes and appearance and so does the Daredevil 2099 from that one-shot.

The Black Panther and the Inhumans ones were really cool, but the Daredevil one was my favorite.

Alright, that's all I got. Thanks for printing my last letter. I will be sending a care package of tacos and porn stars if this one sees print. (gotta up the ante)

Until next time,
Justin "slam-bizzle"manis

Jesus man--I don't want PORN STARS in my tacos. Asshole.

Dude...

"We ARE the walking dead!"

That was one fucking cool ending!

This could have been the last issue of the book and I would have gone away happy: the final realization of their situation. The fact that it wasn't the last issue, just makes me even happier. I cannot wait for #25, even if it is all normal-sized and un-bonus-filled!

The issues have been flying onto the shelves in the past couple of weeks, and you just haven't let up. I'd been watching and waiting for Tyreese and Rick to come to blows for ages now, ever since they came to the prison. With every issue the tension was visibly mounting between the pair. And yet when the smack down came, I was completely taken by surprise! And I loved how the last page of #22 continued into the first page of #23. Who gets credit for that idea: you or Charlie?

Try Erik Larsen. Don't you assholes read the letters columns?

And speaking of Charlie, that splash page at the end of #24? Shit, dude! I want THAT as a poster!

I won't go on any longer, if only because a lot of the letters seem to reiterate the same points, albeit unintentionally. I gotta tell you, I am seriously considering that 560 page hardcover, even if I do have all the issues already...

Keep up the good work guys.
Paul Shinn

The hardcover is totally sweet. You won't regret the purchase.

Dear Kirkman,

"WE ARE THE WALKING DEAD!" I remember a time when you said early on, later saying that it was pretentious. Still, it's good stuff. It seems like the point has been made, yet the book has finally gotten to the point at the same time. Oh, and I complained in the Invincible letter that you didn't print my letters. I was going to say something about the covers not being as great as they were, but the preview for issue 25 changed my mind. Besides, the psycho look on Rick's face on issue 24 is great. Did you not print those letters cause I gave a shout out? I knew that was lame, but did it anyways. I think I also mentioned David Hume. Man, college is killing me.

Man... I don't even know why I don't print some letters. Length, lack of a funny reply... who knows.

So some questions in wonderful numbered format:
1. Were you channeling Rhodes with Rick's rant?

Not really. I channeled Rhodes over in Marvel Zombies, though.

2. Have you ever thought about doing something with vampires? I personally don't care for them, with few exceptions, but it might be cool to see your take (but not in this book).

Shit... I guess I better get rid of the vampires in the next issue.

3. So what killed Allen? Infection from the amputation, zombie bite, loss of blood, or lack of will? Or was it my insistence? In that case, can you kill Andrea? She has it coming. Also, Allen is still listed as alive on the Characters page.

Yeah, I'm not running the characters pages again until I have time to update them. I'm not going to reveal what killed Allen. It could have been any one of those things.

4. Do you have a thing against guys named Allen. Saddest moment in Invincible history! Oh well, I voted to make him a Heroclix figure.

I've SEEN his Heroclix figure... it's GODDAMN GREAT. I don't know why I used Allen in both books without even realizing it. Oh, well.

5. Ever read Rick Spears' Dead West? Good stuff.

I bought a copy. Was really looking forward to reading it... and lost it to the piles. I don't know where the damn thing is now. I'll get around to it soon. I love the stuff Rick Spears and Rob G. do.

So hey, I can now alternate between the Spider-Man zombie cover of Marvel Zombies #1 and the Wolverine cover from #3 as my computer wallpaper. Man, the covers alone have sold the book to me. Give me that c

chance and I'll gush all over the letters pages of those books. Here's to two more years and more of Walking Dead and various other Kirkman zombie books. Can't wait to see the Ultimate X-Men fight Ultimate Voodoo Man and his zombie hoard? Do zombies hoard?

Chris Pitts

The only things they hoard are those cute little matchbox cars. They love those things.

Dear Robert "Don't Call Me Bob" Kirkman,

Please don't call me that. ;-)

Seems like you're getting a ton of letters from fans that proclaim The Walking Dead to be the best comic there is. Well, I'm here to set the record straight. TWD is not the best comic- Invincible is.

Have I printed this letter before?

I do love me some TWD though. After I discovered the greatness of Invincible, I bought the first three trades of TWD before I read a single page of it. That's a risky venture you know. What if I read the first trade and it stank? I'd be stuck with three stinky trades, and I'd be pissed about wasting my money. Fortunately it didn't stink, it rocked!

It took me a little longer to try Marvel Team-up. I wouldn't try it, because I think that the Scott Kolins covers are pug-fugly! (You'll probably interject to stick up for Scott, because you're cool like that, but sorry you're wrong. Please don't cuss at me.) **(You are retarded. Scott Kolins is a fantastic artist.)** I did finally read some MTU though, and it rocks too. I learned then to never doubt The Kirkman, and I've been buying up back issues of anything you wrote. Most of it is pretty great.

On a different note, I was one of those Mormon Missionaries, and I spent some time in Lexington. I wonder if I ever knocked on your door. Were you that guy who threatened to shoot me, if I didn't get off your property? I have an idea. If you want to make up for threatening to kill me you can have Charlie Adlard draw a Mormon Missionary zombie in an issue of TWD. Y'know, put a bike helmet on his head, have him wearing a short sleeved dress shirt, and the black name tag on the chest pocket. The tag could say Elder Ottley. Ha! That would be awesome!

I don't think I've ever had one of those missionaries come to my door. You guys don't seem to be doing your job from where I sit. If I end up going to hell because of you... I'm going to be totally pissed.

Now quit reading letters and get to sleep. You need to scale back on the letters page before you burnout. I need you to stay fresh. If you burnout, you might commit some heinous crime against humanity, like take a hiatus, and that simply won't do.

Brad Linford

PS Congrats on making Wizard's Top 10 writers. You deserve it. Also, Capes is righteous, keep doing the backup stories in Invincible, and bring back Brit.

More Brit is on the way. Did I say that?

A committee is a great idea! Rick's wife really looked concerned for her husband, oh wait, SHE'S A SKANK WITH ANOTHER MAN'S BABY! My bad! Have you ever given thought to Bendis guest writing an issue of Walking Dead? Or, at the least, pay back for listing your

phone number, have a Bendis zombie getting destroyed/killed? Anyway, thanks for the great book and happy holidays!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I wouldn't let Bendis touch this book with YOUR dick. What do I want? A book that's just 22 pages of people sitting around TALKING? That'd be--oh... wait a minute.

Forget I said anything.

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 24. Whoa. That was some good comics. You guys never disappoint. It seems to me that instead of losing it and going off the deep end as expected, Rick has really just opened his eyes and has finally come to terms with the way the world is now. It'll be interesting to see how Rick's new outlook (that things will never go back to normal again) collides with the hopes of rebuilding society that a lot of the characters are still holding on to. And the cover to issue 25? Nothing says let's fight back for society's status quo like a bunch of riot cops. There is some interesting stuff coming our way, I am sure of it.

As for flashbacks, I agree with you. If I wanted flashbacks all over the place, I'd go watch "Lost" or something. Come to think of it, that is what I do.

Lost is a great show.

Also, will we see Rick dealing with Patricia now? She is crazy, or "misguided" I guess, and she's already put everyone's safety in jeopardy, which seems like it should be a pretty big deal to Rick right now. And I hate her.

Isn't it good to have people around that you hate?

Ok, that's all, thanks for rocking my zombie world so much, as well as my super-hero world, and my marvel universe world. You are a king.

-Dan Means

Yeah... a BURGER king.

Kirkman and Company,

First of all, give my geekish existence a break and print this letter. I wrote a very thought-provoking missive about another issue and I think you printed in the neighborhood of 25,000 letters about it but not mine. It gave me a bad complex.

So most of the time I'm reading this letters thing "have I printed ALL these guys before? What the hell--it seems like I print EVERY letter." This issue must be for people who've written in but never gotten printed. Weird.

Secondly, kudos all around for a stellar twenty-fourth issue. I really like the turn you're taking by delving more into the sociological and psychological issues facing our heroes. I know it's been there since the beginning but it really seems to be coming to the forefront now. I kept thinking as I read the issue that it was like an adult Lord of the Flies. Have you read that book? And if so, has it provided any inspiration for the series?

I haven't even seen the movie.

To be honest, I hadn't really thought about the implications of how much ground you can cover with this thing. You can get into whether people are inherently good or evil, whether or not civilization is just a thin veneer to be easily stripped off when society breaks down. You can cover a lot of philosophical questions while, you know, zombies eat people.

Keep up the good work,
Crisman Strunk

I'll try to live up to your expectations.

Thanks for another great issue, Kirkman (and Dead team). I wouldn't be surprised if you get complaints that almost the whole issue was a speech from Rick, but I thought it was a great way to slow down the pace a little after the action last month. Looking at the next issue promo, it looks like we'll be getting right back into the action soon enough.

I also thought it was a great way to wrap up the first hardcover. The last three pages really provided a sense of finality, but leaves the future wide open. It's clear now that there is no hope of rescue, and it's time to create a new life in the zombie world.

Speaking of the hardcover, I love the idea, but I don't think I'm going to be able to afford the price tag... Granted, it's only about \$25 more than the individual issues at cover price, but I don't know about dropping \$100 at once... Maybe I'll find a way to swing it, but it's looking a little doubtful...

One complaint I had with issue 24... While I really liked the last three pages (I'd really like to buy that two page spread from Charlie, but again, there's the money issue), I didn't really care for the line "We are the walking dead." It makes for a great splash page, but it felt kind of corny to have Rick explain the title of the book to us. I know you've done the same in your letters pages, and that was fine, but actually seeing it spelled out that way in the context of the story seemed a little silly. I guess it's just a personal preference kind of thing... It's not like it's going to make me stop buying the book.

Hoaky? Maybe... but I liked the impact of it. I went back and forth over that scene for MONTHS and in the end, I like it. Keep in mind... the characters don't know it's the title of the book. Or that they're even in a book for that matter.

I'm really liking this committee idea that the group came up with (I'm surprised we didn't see how that decision was made. Having us pick up when Rick wakes up makes it seem like it's really HIS story, yet you say he could die at any time...). Anyway, I'm looking forward to the first disagreement in the committee. Rick says he likes the idea, but after having total control for so long, I can see him getting frustrated very quickly when things don't go his way. Another throw down with Tyreese is almost a given!

Now for my numbered questions:

1. In Letter Hacks, one of your readers (Jeff) mentioned that Tony won't be doing covers any more starting with 26. I haven't heard this anywhere else, so is this true? I hope not, because I do really like his covers. If he is leaving, does that mean Charlie gets bumped up to cover artist?

As you can see, this actually happened with 25. Tony got too busy working on Fear Agent (for Image) and Exterminators (for Vertigo) and didn't have time to do covers for TWD any more.

I think you'll agree Charlie and Cliff have more than filled his shoes.

2. Well, I only had one question, but I know how you love numbered questions...

Keep up the good work. I'll be eagerly awaiting the next issue. You're going to keep them coming every one or two weeks from now on, right? We're getting used to it, and you wouldn't want to disappoint us, would you? :-)

Jim Amato

As you can see, keeping up the every few weeks pace is pretty hard to do. Eventually--we'll just be monthly, consistently. It's hard keeping things on track but we'll do it. That's the goal.

Kirkman,

I haven't written in a while. Why did this issue result in my testicles getting bruised?

1) Carol kissing Rick: This additional wrinkle (possible love triangle developments?) adds yet another layer of complexity. I thought about why Carol would do this (Trust me, I didn't take that much time out of my valuable day. White man, please!): a) Tyreese's betrayal; b) Tyreese lied through omission in issue #23 regarding the fellatio scene; c) Rick defending Carol sets up this damsel-in-distress scenario; and, d) What other viable male companion/lover is there for her to choose?

2) Rick deposed as their unofficial leader: a) The reasons why the women wanted only men on the committee totally made sense. The world they live in is very primal and people adapt/revert to survival tactics. I believe the women consenting in this crucial area doesn't mean they are casting themselves as subordinates. I believe that they believe their strengths lie elsewhere; they know this because women really do rule, they just let men think they do. 3) Rick's speech from pages 16-21: He may no longer be in charge, but his honesty (eating crow: "You kill -- you die.") and ability to think outside the box ("We'll make new rules -- we'll still be humane and kind and we'll still care for each other.") still, in my mind, makes him the unofficial leader.

4) Rick says, "We are the walking dead!" Holy fuck, man. You blind-sided me with this. You flipped the scrip with that one. This statement absolutely CHANGES the perspective of the name, of the book, of everything.

Okay, you are genius.

On a serious note: I broke up with my girlfriend of 4 years about 6 months ago. Her favorite comic is The Walking Dead. We used to read aloud this comic together; it's a memory I'll always be fond of. Thank you for giving us something that we could share together.

Here's to happy holidays to you and your family.

Sophea Uk

Good to hear from you Sophea. Sorry to hear about the break-up.

Dear Walking Dead Crew,

All right, you beat me to it. Ever since I started reading your book (about six months now) I've suspected that the title didn't even refer to the zombies, and I was working up the nerve to actually write in and ask you guys about that, but then Issue 24 came out, and now my clever little insight looks so obvious and dated. Oh well!

I love how many of you write in... but don't seem to ever READ the letters columns. Bastards.

And what a lot of stuff has happened in the last few issues! We see relationships strengthen, and erode. We see Rick have a massive break-up with his new best friend and the shattering results. Alan dies, and frankly, considering he was pretty much looking for an excuse to give up for a while, I was surprised he made it as long as he did, poor guy. A mysterious lady shows up and screws everyone's relationships up! And now the group is looking to reorganize its hierarchy, such as it is. And the preview for the next issue...oh boy.

You guys must be insane to put out three comics in six weeks. It doesn't always take too long to write a script (depending on how much you need to edit and such) but I know that good art takes time. Man, did you have Charlie Adlard on stimulant the whole month or something? Great work, guys. Stellar.

It's actually more a case of Charlie drawing the book on a steady pace but all the other stuff that has to happen in order for the book to come out not happening on a steady pace. I'm trying to get things under control.

And now, because I don't think I have ever seen this question posed in any of your letter columns...what's your favorite Resident Evil game? Assuming you guys even play videogames, that is. I don't really have a favorite, myself. The first was almost intentionally awful but its remake rocked. The second, arguably the most popular, had interbranching story paths and a recurring, ever-mutating boss who was awesome, and cool environments. The third stole a lot of notes from The Terminator with its single, extra-powerful boss who simply would not stay dead and chased you through the whole game. The fourth...ah, the fourth doesn't even have ghoulish-type zombies, (instead, it has creepy mind-control zombies) but it brings the series back into the original's promise of "playing a horror movie" and has terrific gameplay, and hard-to-kill chainsaw maniacs with potato sacks over their heads. For completely different types of horror in games you guys might want to check out the Silent Hill series (Psychological! Isolation!) or Fatal Frame series (Scary, Ring-like ghosts you defeat with photography!), but that's neither here nor there.

I personally have only played the first one for any length of time. I have 2 and 4 but haven't gotten around to doing much with them.

Thank you all for a very great comic book. As far as that "Go to issue 250" dream you guys have...if you make it that far, I'll be with you all the way. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Steve Ball

250? Why stop there?!

Mr. K,

Well, you've gone and done it again. My friend and I have been arguing over something that started with the latest issue of The Walking Dead, and once again we've become deadlocked. Hopefully, you can settle the matter once and for all.

Here we go again.

We know what happens when a zombie bites a person, but what happens when a person bites a zombie? I figure, food has to be a major factor at some point, canned goods and the vegetable garden won't last forever. At some point, those things could start to look

a little tasty, especially with careful preparation and enough rosemary. OR, maybe there's some vaccination effect to be gained from eating zombie flesh. Being exposed to the active toxin while perfectly healthy might develop an immunity. I just want to know.

My friend thinks otherwise. She believes that no one in such an environment would ever become crazy or desperate enough to eat a zombie, even if the only alternative was a live family member. She also believes that biting a zombie would be the same as being bitten by one: zombification. I don't see it that way, especially in the Walking Dead world, where everyone is already exposed to the Z-factor, but I'm going to defer to the master on this.

If you could make the time to answer our question, I'd really appreciate it. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Ryan Walsh & Marsha Endre

I'm glad you asked this question. I don't think anyone would ever think a zombie would be "good eating" at ANY point... not matter what. And that's a GOOD thing because if a human bites a zombie a Leprechaun hops out of the zombie's ass and rapes you. That's NO FUN AT ALL.

Dear Kirkman,

Wow!!! The newest issues are amazing. The cover sorta set me off though with the whole Rick's eye thing, but the "We are the walking dead thing!" that they said was just spine tingling. This is the first set of comics I have ever read in my life so you opened my eyes to a new world. You are the best damn writer ever. (By the way I love invincible!!). I have a few questions but first more complements. Your comics are the perfect blend of Sex, Gore, Horror, Action, Comedy, Mind Bending, and freaky situations. Not to mention I am a die hard zombie fan. Okay now the questions....

1.) Why don't you just make the goddamned movie already?!

Not up to me. I'm too busy with comics.

2.) Can I be an extra?!

I'm going to go ahead and say no. Sorry.

3.) Why are there not a lot of children zombies. Maybe one of the twins or someone can become one.

Little legs... they're always in the back of the horde.

4.) Why haven't the survivors just sat out on beach chairs and just blow out the zombies' friggin' brains already I mean what do they do for fun other than have sex?

That would waste bullets. They use far fewer bullets just lying around having sex.

5.) When will a new character come in or another one die.

I'm not giving anything away on the dying front... but we got a new character this very issue... a few actually.

6.) Have you had yourself put in as a zombie yet? I think you should.

I'm in this very issue. Look for me.

7.) You should go up to issue 500. Maybe 501. How high do you think you will go? I just love this series.

Right now I'm thinking issue 1000.

Those are just some of my questions. Just keep writing these amazing comics. I can't wait for the next.

Jason Rostovsky

Me neither.

P.S, This is my third time writing and I would appreciate it so much if it got in. please publish it.

I'll think about it.

Walking Dead is certainly one of the best horror based comics I have ever read.

1. In the Character bio pages at the back of the book. I have 3 suggestions. First one is to have the dead characters status written in bold caps. That would cause it to stand out more just how harsh this world of yours is. "Welcome to the Walking Dead world, Rick has a bullet with your name on it ready and waiting."

Second suggestion is more of a correction. Carl has a typo in his paragraph. The word heavy. And third, well Allen is dead now, right? Still says "alive" in his bio (you ask for more critical emails, right?)

Everything will be fixed... eventually.

2. I can't wait for the alien issue. Will there be an Elvis sighting? Would be kinda cool if the aliens had been subjugated by the King after they abducted him. Have all the aliens wearing dazzling white sequin suits and with massive fake porkchop sideburns.

I was just sitting around thinking of something that would make it clearer this book has "jumped the shark" than aliens showing up... you've done my job for me. Elvis it is.

3. I have really enjoyed the prison storyline. I know that many are clamoring for them to leave, but the potential for stories isn't dwindling because they are in the prison. Although the roster is dwindling a bit.

The prison works... you people will see.

4. I look forward to the Marvel Zombies book, but I have to say that so far I have preferred your work on Walking Dead over the stuff you have done at Marvel. I will still be buying Walking Dead after you jump the shark with issue 75. (Apparently I am one of the only readers of TWD that hasn't jumped on with Invincible yet. I'll have to look into correcting that.)

What are you waiting for? The Invincible: Ultimate Collection contains the first 13 issues along with over 80 pages of extras for \$34.95! And volume 2 is out in March! Hop to it. And try Marvel Team-Up--it's SWEET!

5. Often the issue comes up about a movie or an animated series. I think a cable tv series would be great. But it would have to be from one of the big channels. HBO or Showtime. I appreciate the Sci-Fi channel, but they couldn't do some aspects of the series and in all honesty, there is about an 85%

chance that a Sci-Fi show is gonna totally suck ass. Battlestar Galactica being the rarity. I would hate to see TWD done poorly, it deserves to be done in a spectacular fashion.

We'll see. There's no news to report on that front.

6. I for one don't anticipate this series ending. I hope to still be reading new issues when I am 90. That puts you close to 700 issues, but I am confident you can keep the series fresh at least that long.

Thanks,
JimmyZ

I just turned 27 recently... so I've got at least five or so good years left in me. We'll see. I think Charlie's in for the long-haul... but he's already like 75 so we'll see.

DUDE!

I'm writing with a complaint. Not because you said that the complaints were bound to get printed, mind you. I doubt you even get that many. Anyway, I'm not so sure that the "We are the Walking Dead" bit in #24 really worked. As a long time reader, I know why you had it in there, but I think it should have been left to the editorial or letters page; having a character say it came across as a bit too cute. Although I suppose we could put it down to an after effect of Rick's injuries.

Like I say, I see what you're talking about--but I liked it.

The rest of the issue was great though, and Charlie A's art was even better than usual for some reason. He gives the characters such expressive faces. Great work.

That's because Charlie is totally awesome.

-Kelvin Green

p.s. I also really enjoyed Marvel Zombies and the story you did for the Amazing Fantasy book. When are the guys at the M going to let you take over the Avengers? Hm?

That's Brian's book. I think he's doing a fine job with it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I wanted to write a quick letter to say congratulations on the spectacular run of The Walking Dead to date.

Quick question. Where is the line between what your zombies do and don't want to eat? If they want living flesh, would they stop to eat a steaming BM that was recently expelled from a human body? I would think it would have plenty of organic matter in it and it would smell like the insides of a human, which they don't seem to mind chomping through when they pull a body's entrails apart. I guess the main question here is would one of your zombies stop in their tracks to eat some poo?

Mason

If I answer this letter will there be a bunch of people with a hidden camera popping out of my closet? Seriously. WHAT. THE. FUCK.

I hope you're parents died before they had to see this.

Robert,

I wasn't going to buy the Image Holiday Special 2005, then Comic Book Resources ran an article stating a Walking Dead short story is included. You know what? You are a jerk. I had to buy it now. I bought it. I read it. Thank you for shining a holiday spotlight on Duane and his father; a great emotional, heartfelt story. Yes, folks, another fine episode from the world of (key ominous sounding music)...the Walking Dead.

Okay -- you are NOT a jerk.

Good save.

With how the story is progressing, how soon is Rick and the group's path going to cross with Duane and Dad? A long way off?

Sopheia Uk

Who knows if it will ever happen? It's a big world.

Greetings and Salutations!

This is not the first time I've ever written a comic book. This isn't even the first time I've loved a book enough to write in and proclaim how much I love it. However, this is the first time that I have a feeling that my letter might get read. You see, I like a great many books on the market today. A lot of horror, a lot of superheroes, pretty much everything. Almost.

You see, when the first X-Men movie hit and Marvel changed their X-Books (Not everything I read, but a big slug of it) I felt betrayed. These were not the mutants I loved anymore, and they certainly didn't look like them. The movie was great in it's own way, but to bring the tacky leather to the comics... and all that damn chest hair.. I nearly cried. I almost stopped reading comics altogether. Some random DC books, G.I.Joe, and the now defunct Sojourn every month kept me (mostly) in the loop. I didn't really care all too much about a great story (Although G.I.Joe is a lifelong favorite and Sojourn was an amazing story which never received the end it deserved)

Then things started to change.

One fateful day, my brother in law (Who is also a comic fan, and a fan of yours now) and I were perusing the local shelves. While he was looking for back issues of some sort, I was content on grabbing some random books for reading in the think tank. I looked through the units, trying to find an appealing cover to sway my vote. Then I stumbled on to The Walking Dead #4. I looked at it and thought "The Walking Dead', eh? Let's see...". I picked up the book and skimmed through it. Black & white, nice. The artwork grabbed my eyes. Unfortunately, growing up with the rise of Image and their early standard of eye blistering unnecessary detail swayed me from many of their projects over the years. I didn't realize zombie horror (I am a zombie fanatic) could have these awesomely simplistic styles. I held on to that issue and looked at the back stock, seeing that there were some copies of 1-3 sitting there, going completely unnoticed. I quickly snatched these and said to my brother in law:

"Dude, this looks fuckin' awesome!"

That was the day that changed my comic reading life. I say reading because I collect on story. I have to enjoy the story or I just won't collect the book. It kind of bothers me when people just buy a book for a collection and don't read it. It seems like a waste of time and money.

When I first read those four books, I felt so insanely happy. Loving the zombie genre had never been this fulfilling. The Romero films are cinematic gems, and as far as anything in the genre goes, this book is on that same pedestal in my book. No other book or film has ever come close, and you guys just crashed that wall down. The story was so compelling. The characters were desperate and foolish, yet smart and snappy. Rick is a great lead character and his development so far has been so realistic and enthralling.

Soon I began a pull list at a friend's store which is now a mile long and I am a regular at all the local shops. I've recommended TWD to everyone I know, and with the exception of my 12 year old sister and my parents, they all love TWD and curse me for having all the back issues. Not only has TWD opened me back up to the vast comic world I had almost given up on, but creatively has influenced me to write more and give a much needed boost to my art.

So I thank everyone who has ever contributed to TWD. The book remains amazing and is nearly the only mainstay of my pull list (G.I.Joe and a few others have been there since the start as well). And yes, I have to be an asshole and have a few questions:

1) Mr. Kirkman, what are your top 5 albums? To write to or otherwise.

Uh, top five off the top of my head? Neil Young's Harvest, David Bowie's Let's Dance, Nick Cave's Let Love In, The Presidents Of The United States Of America's first album. But like I say, that's just off the top of my head.

2) Mr. Adlard, same question. Only for you it's "to draw to or otherwise".

Y'know, I really shouldn't do these at the last minute... then I could actually contact Charlie for stuff like this. The thing is... Charlie doesn't read these letters columns I'm sure. Let's see. Charlie--your mom's a wanker. That should get his attention. More news as it develops.

3) Will we ever see any more of Morgan and Duane Jones from the first issue? Unless I missed something, it seems like they could pop up at any moment...

Maybe one of these days. They were in the Image Christmas Special.

If I'm being a broken record kill me, but I keep reading about posters, toys and t-shirts. That would be one of the ten best ideas ever. Right after hygienic products and just before contraceptives. I know I would buy a shit load of toys of these guys.

So there's my two cents and the story of how I fell in love with your book.

Until Issue # 127 where Rick has a laser guided sword (Have you seen "Versus"? It's great!),

Your loyal fan-
Gareth Darko

My friend has been trying to get me to watch Versus for years... I've borrowed it from him at least three times and I never find time to watch it. One of these days though...

And now we've come to the new regular feature

of me trying to get you to buy all my other books. READ ON!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! INVINCIBLE keeps going strong, if you like superheroes or people talking, fighting or crazy things happening to people who fight you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 30 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag with a worthless colorist. Issue 6 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by aforementioned worthless colorist Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY & BEN OLIVER. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a third printing and issue 4 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN.

ITEM! Almost every WEDNESDAY you can swing over to COMIC BOOK RESOURCES (www.cbr.cc) and read my BUY MY BOOKS column. It features jpegs and all kinds of inside info on my upcoming books--that you should buy!

See you cats here again next month right? You better believe it!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to issue 29.

No time for love this month... gotta dive right into the mail.

Here goes!

Hi again, Kirkman!

Just read issue 26... You're seriously starting to piss me off... Here's the list:

1. You show us a helicopter in 25, then I breeze through issue 26 looking forward to finding out who's in the chopper. And at the end of the issue, I'm no closer to an answer! Damn you, Kirkman!!!

I gotta keep the fish on the line, man.

2. More Rathburn back covers?!? You can't keep doing this to me! Rathburn's zombies are so cool that a simple back cover is not enough! If you're going to keep doing this, you're going to have to give Rathburn a fill in issue or a one-shot or something. I can't handle getting this little taste each month and nothing more!

Cliff is working on something non-Walking Dead related right now... he's pretty busy. After that--who knows.

3. That two-page spread between issues 22-23 is a pretty cool idea, even if you did rip it off from Larsen. I didn't even notice it until one of the letters in this issue mentioned it. I went back and checked it out, and it's real cool. But it pisses me off because I know what you're doing, you corporate sell-out whore. The way it's printed, we can't really see what the full spread looks like without folding a comic in half, which you know most people won't do. Now, you'll print the trade with the spread intact, so we need to buy that to see the whole thing. I guess that's Kirkman - always trying to make a buck for "the man" at the expense of his poor fans...

That's not it at all. It's all an effort Erik Larsen... he is the publisher at Image now, you know. Although, I will admit... the extra sales don't hurt.

4. It feels like it's been forever since the last issue. You're probably not behind, but you were putting out more than just an issue a month, so I'm getting used to it... Make this book bi-monthly already! I bet you, Charlie, and Cliff are all wasting a third of your day sleeping when you could be writing./drawing/toning! Just get some Red Bull or Rockstar or something, and get your lazy asses back to work! Sleep's overrated anyway (why else would I be writing this at midnight on a Sunday when I have to get to work in the morning?)

We'll do what we can. We have lost a week or two here and there in the schedule... starting in August, we'll be on track, monthly, like clockwork from here on out. And you can quote me on that... until we blow it.

5. I never even noticed the "Previously In..." section on the inside cover... Good thing you mentioned it in the letters or I never would have seen it. Couldn't you make it stand out more so it would actually be useful to me?!?

Or, y'know... you could LOOK at the credits page or something. I can't read the books FOR you, man.

OK, so that's a weak list, but it's better than your normal "the book's great, keep up the good work" letter you usually get, right? Those are just boring...

Tell me about it.

I'm really looking forward to finding out who was in the helicopter and who the group of people were that beat Rick,

Michonne, and Glenn to it. It's interesting that another group could have been that close to the prison without ever stumbling upon it... Of course, knowing your writing, it'll probably take months for you to answer those questions, because you just LOVE to piss me off!

Anyway, the book's great. Keep up the good work!

Jim Amato

Thanks, I'm going to get back to pissing you off now. I LOVE IT!

Robert Kirkman,

This letter is more of a double thank you. First let me tell you a little about myself. I'm 26 and I play in a rock-pop band called Spitalfiled. I tour about nine months out of the year and I am never home. So "comic book" Wednesday is a bit difficult for me sometimes. This is where the double thank you comes in. My favorite comic book store, Chicago Comics is two blocks from my apartment in the city. I go there every time I'm home and usually pick up a couple of trades before I leave for a tour. I brought up Invincible volume 1 and they said it was "amazing" and "you'll be back for two because that's when the shit hits the fan". It was their recommendation and high praise for you that convinced me to pick it up. Well, an hour later I was back. While I was picking up number two they told me of your other works including The Walking Dead. A week later I find myself owning all volumes of Invincible and The Walking Dead. So Kudos to those guys at Chicago Comics.

Indeed--thanks bunches, guys.

Second thank you goes to you and all working on this book. What a character you have in that Rick Grimes. I mean the transition that he has gone through since issue one. You can see it on his face, the way he walks and talks. With the work of Moore/Adlard and your stories, man his guy has substance. Too many times I find that the characters in some of the books I am reading, stay the same while only their situations and surroundings change. That is not the case here. And that's why I'm writing this to you and everyone that works on The Walking Dead. To tell you the truth I never ever thought about writing a letter to the editor, or creator of my favorite books until today. So again THANK YOU Chicago Comics and THANK YOU Robert Kirkman.

Newly acquired fan of your work,
Tj

No, thank you.

Greetings Zombie-lovers,

I've been reading the monthly since issue ten, so I've been following your letter column for a while, and there are a couple of topics I'd like to weigh in on: First, I know you're sick of people asking you what you thought of Land of the Dead - so I'm not going to - but I do gave an observation to make; one of the joys of the zombie genre is seeing real, recognisable people under pressure react to the breakdown of society. Personally, I find the idea of the world abruptly ending (aside from a handful of survivors) fascinating.

One reason Land (and Day) is less regarded than Dawn and Night is that they lack the resonance of witnessing the slow collapse of civilization. Land skipped to a point where zombies are a fact of life, and lost some of the immediacy that made

Dawn so poignant. One reason I love this book so much is that it's unfolded from the very beginning of an epidemic, so the people we're following are still grounded in a familiar world. The Walking Dead captures the 'What if this happened right now?' aspect of Romero's films in a way the later sequels didn't (don't get me wrong, I loved Land and Day, but neither give me the queasy, exhilarating sense of unease I get when I watch the opening half hour of Dawn). In your November '05 letter column you mentioned how tempted you were to have a helicopter with a pregnant blonde and a black police officer land on the prison roof - I'd sell you my soul if you did that (if not, it's available on e-bay). I mean, nobody else is ever going to use those characters. Even if it were an ambiguous cameo, it'd be a nod to the genre that inspired this comic. I'm sure there are ways to do it without leaving yourself legally vulnerable - I'm reminded of the 'Leonard' the Duck switcheroo pulled by Gerber in the Savage Dragon/Destroyer Duck one-shot a few years back. Given that you're Erik Larsen's bitch (and who wouldn't want to be?), I'm sure you're aware of the massive 'Fuck you!' to Marvel that I'm referring to. I've got my fingers crossed that the downed helicopter in issue 26 may have been carrying a black cop and a knocked-up woman. Of course, you may take the higher path and stick with your own characters, but I still hope you indulge your inner geek...

I like to think the heads that The Governor were putting in fish tanks this issue--the ones from the people from the helicopter--are that of a black police officer and a blonde woman... but their origins, are a tad different... but that's about as close as I'm going to get to using those characters illegally.

Some people seem to be complaining that the story is getting too soap opera-ish lately, and lamenting the lack of zombie action. I'd just like to say that one of my favourite things about this book is that the zombies don't have to be front and centre every issue for it to be a great read. I'm as big a fan of hatchet-wielding, samurai-sword swinging zombie-smooching as the next reader, but it's the characters I come back for. Besides, all that slow-burn led to the fight between Rick and Tyreese, a showdown rich with drama because of the time taken to build a believable friendship between the two. I was shocked that it went as far as it did, but I still found it believable, and I can't wait to see what happens next between those guys. As far as I'm concerned, the pacing and focus of this book is perfect; without the quieter lulls, the action would feel pretty empty.

Thanks.

I would like to ask, why haven't the survivors discussed their theories about why the dead are walking around? I know that you (as a writer) aren't interested in exploring the origins of the zombies (yet), but our guys must have discussed it. I know that they probably talked about it a lot before Rick showed up in Atlanta, but somehow I think it'd still be a hot topic (especially with no TV). I guess I just want to see if anyone comes up with a reason as cool as 'When there's no more room in hell, the dead will walk the earth...'

It's been mentioned at least once... with Andrew. I imagine most of the characters talked about it before Rick arrived in issue 3. And Rick has other things occupying his mind.

I have no list of numbered questions for you to answer, since you seem to be busy enough. I'll just say thanks for producing such a great book - I have a feeling that years from now, The Walking Dead might be spoken of with the reverence of the original trilogy - y'know, the way people first looked at Sopranos as a knock-off of Analyse This, and then quickly realised that it was actually a genre-defining masterpiece.

Take it easy,
Paul Doncaster, England

P.S. I laughed my ass off when I saw what you did to the Silver Surfer in Marvel Zombies (so I guess you owe me a new ass).

The ass is in the mail.

P.P.S. I think Michonne is a spy working for another bunch of survivors, that this other bunch of survivors took the people from the plane. But then again, I'm a cynical fucker.

Michonne is not a spy.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

You, my friend, are a miracle worker. You got me to do two things that I swore I would never do.

The first was to end my boycott of Image comics, I swore that after the whole Todd McFarlane / Neil Gaiman lawsuit over the Miracleman rights that I would never buy anything with Todd's name attached to it. The second was to write into a comic book. I'm a 33 yr. old comic book fan, I have been a serious collector since I was 16, as my wife will tell you I take my comics very seriously. One of my all time favorites series was Miracleman (just

to let you know that The Walking Dead just knocked it down to number 2 on my list) unfortunately when Neil Gaiman took over for Alan Moore, he was unable to finish it because Eclipse Comics went under, leaving us readers wondering if he was going to be able to finish the series. I'm not going to bore you with all the details (I'm sure you know more about it than me anyhow) but I sided with Neil on everything, and when Todd tried to bring Miracleman back in Hellspawn, I just about lost it. I new that Neil was trying to finish the story he was trying to tell, and well I just thought that Todd was being a prick about it. Well I am also a huge zombie fan, I can remember watching Dawn of the Dead when I was about 8 or 9 and just being amazed. It wasn't until I saw the remake that I became hook and all things zombies. Could you imagine my dismay when I heard about this book, after much soul searching I decide to buy the first trade paperback and read it twice in one sitting. I couldn't get back to the comic book store fast enough to buy the other 3. What an amazing series! Next to Miracleman, I have never felt so... I don't have a word for it.... satisfied after reading all 4 trades. I just finished issue 25 and 26 and let me tell you I will never miss an issue from here on out. I also look forward to picking up some more titles by Image now that I broke down and bought TWD.

Image is a fantastic company, of which Todd McFarlane is part--a large part, but he's not affiliated with this book or any book from Image Central (I.E. non Top Cow and non Todd McFarlane Productions). I will say that from my experience, Todd is a swell guy and there are two sides to every story. I refuse to take sides because I don't know the whole story.

Number 2, I have never felt the need to write into any comic book that have read until now, I don't even really know what to say, your book floors me, the story lines are awesome, the characters are very believable, I even prefer the black and white to color with this book.(the B/W really gives it a feeling of despair, desperation, and loneliness.) Well thank you for your time and I hope to see this letter in print in an upcoming issue, one last thing, could you please recomend 3-5 titles published by Image that I could pick up, I enjoy zombies, but also the superhero genre as well as books like Y- the last man. Again, thank you for what you do, you have got to have the best job in the world

Fan for Life
Erik Porter

Well, I won't recommend Invincible and Battle Pope (my other books) because that would seem too cheap. But they're good books and if you like my work on this book you might just like those as well... that's "INVINCIBLE" and "BATTLE POPE" more about them can be found at the end of this letters column. Now, five OTHER books you might like at Image?

1. GIRLS
2. GODLAND
3. NOBLE CAUSES
4. SEA OF RED
5. FELL

Dear Image Creator,
I apologize in advance for forgetting to recommend YOUR book. It's not because I dislike it, or think it's sub par. It's possible I just didn't think the content would jive with someone who likes TWD and superheroes as the letter writer mentioned. PVP is a fantastic book... but maybe this reader wouldn't like it. I'll be sure to mention your book next time. Promise.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Firstly, I want to say I'm a big fan of your work! I do have a question though. Several of my friends and I spent \$100.00 on the Walking Dead Slipcase HC, which was beautiful by the way, and were concerned to see a new hardcover format of issues 1-12 in the latest Previews. Maybe I'm jumping the gun here but does this mean there will not be a volume 2 hardcover slipcase?

Yours truly;
Big Mike

THERE WILL BE A SECOND SLIPCASE VOLUME. I PROMISE. We have to get to issue 48 first though. The 12-issue hardcovers will be cheaper and have less stuff--and WILL NOT be limited. I want a volume 2 slipcase... so I promise there will be one. MAYBE Christmas 2007... but maybe Christmas 2008... we'll see. But there WILL be one.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

Hello and best wishes. About two months ago I read Invincible #1 and the Walking Dead through the Image site's digital comic format. I really liked them and had to find out what happened next. (Their ploy worked on me) Anyway, so I went straight to Amazon and bought the hardback collection volume one of Invincible and the 1st TPB of TWD. Wow! This pretty much blew my mind. So I went and bought up the back issues of Invincible and the rest of the TPB's of TWD and am now current.

They just saw the helicopter.

The problem is, now that I'm up to date, I have to wait month by month to get these little single issue tidbits. This sucks. I think this qualifies as an addiction. You see, I am a doctor and I have been sneaking into the call room at the hospital to read these things. I've been getting them in the mail, sneakily hiding them from my wife so she doesn't know that I'm spending money on this stuff. (sounds similar to a dope problem, huh). Funny thing, I've bought two of TWD trades at Barnes & Nobles and each time the check out person said something like "Good choice. This stuff is great!"

Bottom line; I'm writing this to wish you congratulations on making a living doing something you like and that a lot of other people really like. Not everyone is that lucky. Also, as your career moves forward into bigger \$ projects, I hope you don't completely leave this format behind. Another thing. When the movies start coming, keep complete creative control. Don't let them water your stuff down. I can't wait to see them.

Another fan,
Jason

Yeah, sorry you have to put up with the monthly grind now. That's just the nature of the business.

As far as abandoning this book goes... all I have EVER wanted to do since I was like... ten years old is work in comics. All I've EVER wanted to do since I started working in comics is have LONG runs on books, getting to tell broad, over-arching story arcs... and getting to stay on a book for years and tell a full story.

So now that I have that with Invincible and The Walking Dead... I'm not going ANYWHERE. I want to see both books reach at least 100... but I've got no plans to go anywhere on either book after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for proving my theory. I've long held the contention that zombies make everything better. Be it video games, movies, or comic books, I see few things that couldn't be improved by the living dead. Bored with Super Mario Bros.? Understandable. You wouldn't be bored if you were jumping on the heads of the shuffling undead instead of waddling mushrooms. Movies? How much more enjoyable would Titanic have been if Leo DeCap would have come back from his watery grave to feast on the brainpan of his darling Rose?

I like the cut of your jib, fella.

Now, in the midst of a cultural zombie revival, I find myself increasingly impatient for the next issue to come out. Thanks for that. It's the ongoing zombie saga that could never be provided by any other medium. It's not a Nintendo game, it's not a movie, it's my comic collection that's been vastly improved by the presence of zombies. And specifically, the batch that you've cooked up and the lives you've shown us that have been affected by them. There are other books with zombies in them on the shelf, but your team has created a new standard for the undead. Congratulations, and thanks again.

Loyally yours,
Gavin Napier

Thanks for writing.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy crap. Issue 26 is the issue I've been waiting for and there's more to come. Helicopters crashing, random zombie attacks, polygamy, soap opera goodness. Woo-hoo. I love it when I can't predict what's going to happen. Never thought Carol would ask to marry Rick and Lori. Good times. Got the whole Lost thing going with the others in the area. Feel like I should say more, but you need that space in the back to plug your other books, make fun of Bendis, and print those bios... Heh. Oh, and I spilled water all over this comic and the back page fused with my Tommy Boy DVD box. Just thought I should share that.

Questions:

1. Ok, I convinced you to put up Invincible for a Heroclix set. Now how about The Walking Dead for Horrorclix?

We'll see.

2. I've been selling people the Invincible trades, but there are no letters. Bendis includes some letters in his Powers trades. You are better than Bendis, right?

Yes, I'm MUCH better than Bendis. That's why I put stuff you actually want to SEE in the trades instead of mountains of ego stroking letters you'll never read. I swear... that Bendis... he was so much better before he cut his hair.

3. Romero might be making a sequel. What do you think? What would you like to see?

A direct continuation from Land of the Dead. I'm looking forward to it.

4. Have you seen Dead and Breakfast? Such a great movie. Has zombies, but not the Romero breed. Good stuff. They do Thriller.

Not yet... maybe some day.

5. Zombie Gorillas? Already been done. The band Gorillaz rocks. They begin their newest album with music from Dawn of the Dead. A song from another album is nothing but Dead film sound bites.

That's right.

6. Did you know that when you have a tickle in your throat, scratching your ear to cause small throat spasms makes it better?

I'll certainly try that next time.

I'm pumped with the new direction in this book and Invincible. Tellin you man, Walking Dead Horrorclix. Chance to kill Allen all over again. Looking forward to the new MTU stuff as well. Haven't read Ultimate X-Men, but I promised you I would. I'll tell you what I think.

Kirkmaniac,
Chris Pitts

You better get on that Ultimate X-Men bandwagon soon--that book NEEDS the readers!

Mr. Kirkman,

Issue 27. Dear God, where do I start? I have been reading TWD since issue #1. Many times your book has made my jaw drop, but nothing can compare to the last page of #27. I actually yelled "Holy !@#\$\$\$"! which made my dog jump about 20 feet!

Really? You shoulda really screamed at the end of 28.

How will Rick handle this situation? Something tells me that all three of them don't make it out in one piece. Michonne looks to be able to take care of herself, but is Glen up to the task? It also was a nice touch to see that the 3 of them were smart enough not to divulge the prison camp. Will the truth slip out? Much as I would like to see a Living vs Living battle, I'm not sure I want to see the prison survivors go against what appears to be a professional army.

This book continues to get better every month. It is great to finally get some new characters, and we will hopefully get to see what/how they have survived. The last page was actually terrifying to me! Dr Logan and Millard Roush would definitely approve!

This is without a doubt the best title on the market right now. The dialogue is believable, and the story is really starting to pick up speed now. I have tried to get others aboard the TWD, and my fiancé Jenn is absolutely nuts about this book as well.

Have you had a chance to check out "Escape from the living dead?" It's not as bad as I thought it would be, and miles better than "Toe Tags" by Romero. My local shop, Harrison's in Salem, Massachusetts, has a whole wall devoted to horror comics right now, but they tell me that TWD is without a doubt the best selling title right now. It's always good to see a true fan make good, Robert!

I haven't checked that book out... I'll probably buy the TPB.

Marvel Zombies kicks all kind of ass also, but TWD is still my favorite. Please, no matter what the "Big guys" offer you, please keep writing this one, please???

Until next time,
Phil Stevens

Read what I said above. I'm not going anywhere. And neither are Charlie or Cliff as far as I know.

Robert,

While working today, I had several questions regarding Walking Dead. Several questions are silly, others are out of mild curiosity. At any rate, here they are:

1. Will you ever reveal if the zombie apocalypse is localized or globalized?

We'll be getting more hints of that as the series goes on. My lips are sealed.

2. Does the title "Walking Dead" exclude the living dead diasabled? Ie. Will we ever see zombies in wheelchairs?

Yes. I'm very hateful toward the handicapped. I will be doing a "The Rolling Dead" spin off title as soon as I'm washed up and desperate for cash... in August.

3. Will you please, please have the following character exchange: Character one: Man, things can't get much worse. I don't how we can go on... Character Two: The drummer from Def Leopard only has one arm, he did.

That was in issue one, wasn't it?

4. Who would win in a fight to the death, the drummer from Def Leopard or Lance Armstrong?

That drummer who's name you (and I) can't bother to look up on the internet... for sure.

5. Have you ever been angry that you've killed off a character though it was demanded in the storyline? Which one?

I would have liked to have kept them ALL around for at least a little longer... but when they gotta go they gotta go. That's what this book is about. I think keeping Amy around would have been fun. Who DOESN'T miss Jim. Shane could have mucked things up longer. I probably shouldn't have killed SO MANY of Hershel's kids. It's so unrealistic to have that guy even forming sentences... Allen and Donna were fun. Donna in particular could have been cool to have around... but sadly... they're all dead.

Got a customer. That's it for now.
-Thanks,
Andrew

Thanks for writing.

Dear Walking Dead team,

I stopped buying comics when I was fourteen years old. Ghost Rider started to suck, I discovered girls, and started going to lollapalooza. I hadn't really thought too much about comics for the past twelve years except when I had to lug the shoeboxes full of them that I still had every single time I moved. Even then, everytime the thought was "damn, I really need to get rid of these things." Things changed at the beginning of last summer. I was getting tattooed for nine hours in two days, and as exciting as my tattoo artist is to talk to it got just a little tiring. While hunched over with a needle jabbing into my back for hours on end I noticed a book on his cluttered shelf of art-books in front of me titled The Walking Dead. As he and I are both horror movie fanatics I knew that it would be interesting, although I must say I was skeptical because it was in comic form (Ghost Rider really disappointed me by issue 26; deep scar.)

Well now here it is nine months later and that first trade has given a (re)birth to an old habit. I am a full-fledged comic book nerd once again. The book blew me away immediately as a literary accomplishment and a comic. It made me ask Lance (the tattoo artist) if other comics were out there as good. He said "I'll bring you the other two trades tomorrow." After I devoured those I immediately went out to my local comic shop and pestered the owner into telling me other books that were as good as yours. Of course Walking Dead and Invincible are my two favorites that he recommended but I'm a big fan of Brian Vaughn's work and Rick Remender. It's sad that Tony Moore had to leave you but the guy's doing amazing things with Fear Agent and also Exterminators. **(I agree... and I love working with Charlie, so it was all for the better.)**

Anyway, I'm rambling but I JUST finished, like minutes ago, issue 27 and I must say its my favorite issue in a while. I was a little disappointed that 25 didn't get the special treatment Inviincible got for its 25, but this one makes up for it in the ohmigod I have to know what's happening next dept. I have three comments/questions:

1) Why weren't Rick, Glen, and Michonne concerned with finding any markings on the helicopter? They were curious about it being military or television etc...as it was flying, but no mention of its origin was posed when they reached the crash site, don't know why this bugs me so much, but...you know?

Uh... they were distracted by the footprints? I suck as a writer? Pick one.

2) Glad to see the arrival of the inevitable "outsiders" that would have to ruin everything great that has been achieved (although the definition of great would have to be stretched) a'la the bikers of Dawn, or the rednecks of Night, the soldiers of 28 days...(sorry to bring that movie up) I keep expecting Andrew to pop back up since his swift departure after Dexter's death. Not that this plot development is derivative at all, its exciting and seems to serve as a way for the characters to realize that the world that has been destroyed might have been destroyed for a reason, people are bastards.

The new group will add a lot to the book. Fun and interesting times are ahead.

3) I don't think I've laughed harder in a long time than at your responses to the letters in 27 about poo eating zombies or "what would happen if a human bit a zombie" debate, wow if you printed those letters I'll feel lame if I don't see mine (wink wink.)

It's taken care of.

To wrap it up, thanks a lot for getting me into comics again, though my wallet is crying for mercy, especially after buying that hardcover deluxe madness, keep up the fantastic work. It depresses me that you are only 27 (my age) I am a lazy lazy person.

Thanks.
Adam Mitchell.

Don't feel bad. I'm sure I'll probably die before you do with all this stress I put myself through. You'll win in the end. You'll see.

Kirkman!
Woot! I'm so excited! You wrote "Charlie's in for the long haul!!! Hoorah! I love the long haul! The best comics are when the writer and artist stay on for a few years. I felt reluctant about TWD until the third trade came out. Didn't want to invest in a story just to see it pawned off to hired writers. I cut you some slack though, I held off of Savage Dragon until issue 75 before I started buying it.

Is that the theme of this issue? I'M NOT GOING TO QUIT. NO ONE OTHER THAN ME WILL EVER WRITE THIS BOOK... until I totally sell out. But seriously, I don't plan to ever leave. The book will be cancelled long before I feel like letting someone else write it.

Ooh speaking of! I've an idea, y'know how Larsen is on like issue one-hundred twenty-something of Savage Dragon? If he keeps going at his pace, and you keep going at yours you could totally beat him to issue 200! That would be AWESOME! You should bet him some money on that!

I would love to do that. Just to stick to old baldy (that's what we call him around the Image office). I tell you what... I'll give it a shot.

I want you to know how much I appreciate how well you manage to balance the book. Sometimes scifi/fantasy/horror starts off with so many ideas and then disappoints by failing to deliver on them. You've done a masterful job of pulling in the reins to keep it interesting and yet containable.

Your reader until you stop,
Mahdroo McCaleb

P.S. I was horror struck when Michonne said "when we get to wherever it is we're going...it's just a matter of time before they catch up to us and the longer our trip the more there will be." That made me imagine Atlanta's millions of zombies surrounding the prison. The thought of vast herds of zombies sweeping the country side was terrifying (is that what the people in the Helicopter were looking at?)

Only the shadow knows! Or... Only time will tell! Your pick.

First off, I work at Wal-mart and I freaking love that there is a shot of one in the background in issue #27! LOVE IT! Sometimes I feel like we're all zombies working there! Anyway, no entertainment means feeding strangers to zombies? That's really messed up!!! Love the book and thanks again to the whole team that works on it!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

I worked at Wal-Mart in high school. Tony Moore worked in the Wal-Mart pharmacy (same Wal-Mart) shortly after high school. Wal-Mart REPRESENT! I don't think Charlie or Cliff ever worked in a Wal-Mart.

Kirkman,

Not much to say that isn't usually said in over 7 pages of fun mail (I READ EM)! Likewise my first time I HAVE ever written in EVER to anything. I started on the Walking Dead late in it's existence, my first issue being #19 where we are introduced to Michonne. Crazy issue to jump into but best \$3.70 CANADIAN I ever spent. Didn't bother with the trades at the time because rumour was swirling of the massive 24 issue hardcover (shout-outs to Darryl at Cyber City in Toronto, Ontario, who gave it to me for American Cover! Customer 4 life!). When the omnibus arrived I spent that entire Wednesday reading the goddamn thing and there is nothing I can say that hasn't been said aside keep 'em coming. But wow the wait between 25 and 26 seemed like years. What was the actual wait period? Seemed longer then the wait between Ultimates 9 and 10! But looks like your getting back on track with 2 issues coming out monthly twice in the next 3 months! Now on to the customary questions:

1.) Carol seems about to crack. Is she really that lost without a man that she'd be willing to go into a 3 some marriage? Maybe its a clever scheme so she has an excuse to get it on with Rick and not feel guilty about pulling a Tyreese on Lori's ass.

We'll see. She's pretty nutty these days. I don't think it's just because she doesn't have a man, though.

2.) I've heard a big change is coming in the next few issues. Is the big change going to involve Lori's baby? With new characters coming out of issue 27 I can see how no one has thought about it yet but if something is wrong with Lori's baby I can see a rift forming between Rick and Lori with Carol in the middle.

The baby is coming... but not just yet.

3.) What do zombies do for entertainment when there aren't any humans around to munch on?

Racquet ball.

4.) Last but not least ATTEND A TORONTO CON! We got 2 coming up here April 23rd and 28-30th. I want you to sign my Walking Dead Omnibus. Plus we got lots of donut shops everywhere! I'll bring you a dozen. Just print me a list of your favorites.

I'm sure I'll make it to Canada eventually.

Hope you print this letter and you need to take over Ultimate Spider-man. I'll be waiting for that day! Zombie King Kirkman, fan for life here.

Sincerely,
Mike Somrna (To many fucking Mike's. Needa name change).

Bendis is scared of what I'll do with that book. He doesn't want me to make him look bad. Some day, though... some day...

Kirkmanotron!

You've really shaken things up with the introduction of the second "haven", and in a nicely unexpected way. I can't wait to see where things go from here, and the sense that the "Governor" and his boys are going to screw everything up for our favourite survivors is hard to shake. Even if they never find out about the prison, the tension is always going to be there, knowing that they're just down the road.

Speaking of which, surely someone in the town knows about the prison, seeing as it's within easy traveling distance? Or did they last check on it before Rick and the gang moved in?

The group in Woodbury is very large... some people don't even know others. Also, Governor is not exactly making it public knowledge how they're getting their supplies. Not everyone in the camp is a rotten person. Also, most of the people in town aren't from that specific area of Georgia.

If I moved 40 miles South in Kentucky... where I have lived all my life. I would have NO IDEA what was five miles in any direction without doing some serious exploring... and that would take resources I might not have.

Also, the little chat with Lori highlighted some interesting questions about morality and the like, beyond the "kill or be killed" stuff the men folk are always going on about. I wonder if you'll be delving into similar questions about what's right and what's wrong with the Governor and his enclave. It would be a shame, I think, to take the easy route and broadly portray them as cackling villains.

Another great issue, Mr K.
Keep it up!

I'm trying to make the "villains" of this book as three dimensional as possible. Let me know if I succeed.

Mr Kirkman,

I just want to say thank you. You rock man. The Walking Dead is my favorite comic book. You make me dream! So here are a few questions, after reading The Walking Dead 27 :

1) Do you have an idea of how the story will end? I mean is it a happy end?

I do have a rough idea... I'd rather not say if it's happy or sad.

2) Will we see Duane and his son again (beside the Holiday Special) ?

We'll see. They're still out there somewhere... but it's a big world.

3) D'you think the characters will travel outside the US ?

Probably not. That would be hard to do given where they are geographically.

4) I want to know what happened to Tyreese when he was in the basketball field! How did he survive? And will we know what is going on in his head since his daughter died?

He went crazy and killed a shit load of zombies, almost in a trance due to the stress he was going through. It could happy, these things are slow and are probably not well balanced. The odds were against him... but it's not impossible that anyone could do that if they were in good shape and had the temperament to do what he did. We'll be hearing more from Tyreese as we go on... he's got a lot on his mind.

Thanks for everything! Hope you'll stay with the book till the end!
Francois

Please print me, print me, i'm so okay with that!

Your wish is my command.

Just wanted to compliment you on a story that not only delivers

characters that you care about but also the action and of course horror that work very nicely instead of just overloading the reader on gore and violence as a sole means to keep them interested, and to all the people that think nothing but shoeless hicks come out of Kentucky you have once again proved them wrong. It's all around a great story and can't wait until the next issue.

Jonathan Poole

Have you SEEN me? If I don't qualify as a "shoeless hick" I don't know WHO does!

Dear Kirkman, Adlard & Rathburn,

Bravo, my friends, THE WALKING DEAD is now back on track. I just read and re-read that final page in issue 27 and it STILL scares the hell out of me. Wow!
I can't remember the last time I've felt so anxious to read the next issue of TWD. Psycho modern-day savages vs. our heroes vs. the zombies? This is gonna be harrowing (but fun).

Peaks and valleys people. This book will always have slower character driven issues from time to time... that's the design of the book. To have four slow issues of character development and to think the book has "gone of track" is insane. You've got to care about these guys before their guts get ripped out.

Cheers,
Dann Lennard
Sydney, Australia

P.S. Kirkman, are you reading all the zombie anthologies being put out by BOOM? They're pretty entertaining.

I've read a couple. They're not bad.

P.P.S. I've particularly enjoyed the past two issues where you've interspersed the main storyline with the ongoing soap opera sub-plots in the prison. Nice one, fellas. :D

Thanks.

Dear Kirkman,
What can I say that hasn't already been said? TWD is phenomonal! The combination of your superb writing and Charlie and Cliff's art beats the hell out of just about every comic out there. But everyone already knows these things, I see them all the time on your letters page. Seriously man, I'm running out of ways to kiss your ass. Back to the letters page though, you said in Steve Ball's letter how you love how so many people write in but don't ever read the letters columns. I just wanted to say I'm a devoted fan of reading the letters like that one where that dude wrote in and said some stuff and you said some stuff back. Man, that was gold! I'm still catching up to Invincible and haven't even started on Brit yet, but I'll get there. I do have a question (and it's not even a TWD question, but I'm gonna be a total dick and use up this space while I have it), will you be doing anything for Marvel's upcoming Civil War? It would be make sense for something to be thrown into a MTU issue seeing as how that book is written for the purpose of throwing heroes together, and it's most fun to see them when they don't agree. Thanks for the great stories!

Mike Parks

I'm doing "The Irredeemable Ant-Man" which will spin out of Civil War... otherwise I'll just be watching from the sidelines. Marvel Team-Up is focusing on other stuff during the crossover.

So far the issues I've read of this book have been #1, and #'s 24-27. There are some things I wonder if you have ever covered in the endless dialogue of the issues I haven't read:

What do Rick and co. think God is doing about the whole alien zombie thing? Do they ever talk about God at all? For example, "How could God let this happen?!!!"

It's been mentioned briefly. Hershel is religious.

The issue of entertainment was brought up by 'Governor' in issue #27; what DO the regular cast do for entertainment? Besides reading and sleeping around, of course. Somebody must have a deck of cards right? What about food? They live in a prison...what happens when they run out of food? Go traipsing off to the woods to kill some deer??

Probably. Right now the prison is still well stocked with government issue canned goods. They'll be fine for a little while at least... but they WILL run out of food eventually, and this book will show that. That's the fun part of this book for me. We will eventually get around to everything.

And here's an idea. Maybe it's naive, or you've already covered it, but still, here goes: why not just have Rick and his band kill all the zombies--if that's possible, I mean--then repopulate the Earth??? Sure it would take generations, even the killing part, but--ya know?

It is not possible. Zombies outnumber people like 1000

to 1 or so right now... and there are FAR more people alive than we've shown.

At any rate, I do kinda dig this series and have started reading it regularly. I don't even mind the black and white any more (Rick has brown hair right?). I was fooled by the Governor and co. and their intentions too; at least until the next to the last page. And, gee, "how will they get out of this one??"

Letter Hacks is a bit vague for a letter column, really. Is there such a thing as a Dead Letter?? Sounds familiar. My favorite characters? Michonne...the blonde woman, don't know her name yet. but there are a lot of kids at the prison--how did They survive so long on the outside?? And how long has it BEEN anyway? A few years or more, like in real life?

Cya.

The kids had parents protecting them. You really should pick up the TPBs. I'm not looking this up (I do keep all this stuff written down) but it's been about 8 months since the zombie plague started. It's May or June or so and the "plague" started in October. So not even a year has passed, which is why Lori is still pregnant.

First off, I know a hundred other people have said it before, but I have to thank you for getting me back into comic books. Hell, I can even get my girlfriend to go to Comic Book World to pick up issues for me since I got her addicted to TWD too.

Now, I hate to do this. Especially considering this is my first letter, but when I was reading through the first issues again I came across the part at the farm where the family had all killed each other. Considering what happened to Chris and Julie, why didn't this family turn into zombies? I really don't mean to be a bastard and ask a question like this, but I really had to ask you. Unlike most fan boys, I will not be bothered by it if you just say that you didn't decide that normal dead would turn into zombies until later, and if anyone complains just tell them to shove it.

Anyways thanks for the great comic, keep up the good work.

Chris Johnston

If you'll notice... EVERY SINGLE dead, non-moving body that has appeared in this book since the beginning has had a head injury destroying the brain. That family in particular was shot in the head by the father and then he shot himself. Look again... this was all planned from the beginning.

Dear Crew,

First of all let me get the obligatory "this comic is incredible" out of the way, this comic is incredible. I am a big fan of your writing Kirkman, you don't mind me calling you that, do you? You, your crew, and your comics are a constant topic of conversation between my friends and I. Me, being relatively new to this whole comic world (I've been into it for a year), have never had to face the horrors of waiting for an issue to come out. One reason is that a lot of comics I initially read were in trade form, and another is that I never really "got into" a series like I did until I picked up the Walking Dead.

I really love your stuff, Kirkman. I picked up Invincible and Battle Pope. I wrote a letter to Battle Pope, not realizing that that series was an old one, and my letter had no chance of making it to print. I felt like an idiot when my veteran comic book friend told me I was an idiot for not realizing that. I digress, Kirkman, I just wanted you to know that I went through a lot of being angry at you as well. I went through all these stages of hating how delayed this book got, one reason is because comic books are really the only silver lining in my lame-ass customer slave existence, and not getting my favorite comic book (along with Invincible) "on time" was not cool to me. I wanted to post on your forum and give you a piece of my mind...but then I realized you must have so much other things going on. You've got a life, just like anybody else, and I have come to peace with the fact that if quality is what you consistently produce, then I can wait. I just wanted to say I was wrong, and I'm sorry for yelling your name every time your books were delayed.

I do apologize for that. We will be shipping on book a month like clockwork from this point on. So those days should be behind us. I do still maintain that the delays this title has suffered have not been that severe... we've should be shipping issue 36 in October and we'll be shipping issue 33. That means we've lost three months in THREE YEARS. But yeah, we'll be doing better now.

As far as a question with where this comic book is going: Is Carl going to go crazy as he grows up? I mean, he's shot a man, zombies, been shot, has threatened to shoot others... and his dad is going slightly off the tilt...what sort of man could Carl become? From a psychologists standpoint, the boy has been through a lot, at the very least he might develop a twitch, but he stays really calm...what's up with that?

Carl has had a rough life... that will affect him as he gets older. And if all goes according to plan he will eventually get older.

Oh yeah, and another thing. I'm pretty poor, as I have a pretty nasty comic buying habit (I was buying back issues of this comic on ebay last month...I couldn't pay rent on time last month because of it...I was thinking with all the referrals I have made to people to read your books, maybe I could get reimbursed :) like maybe with an issue #1 and 2? I know this is a long shot, but as long as I have your ear, I thought I may as well ask. You can send it to (address kept confidential to avoid nutjobs).

I'd love to send you free comics but I just don't have that many lying around these days. I've got to stay well stocked for my grandkids... y'know... the little shits who won't give a damn about comics in 30 years.

P.S. In hopes of proving why my letter should get printed (or at least a part of it) my name is unique and would be a great addition to the letters page, and you don't have too many middle easterners in your letters column (I counted at most 2). Oh yea, just wanted to shout out to my LCS Comicopolis, I love that place.

Pouria Yazdi

Your name is CRAZY!! A welcome addition to the column.

Now I think it's time for me to do a little shilling. I mean... we've got to do something to keep the lights on right?

ITEM! INVINCIBLE is still kicking ass and taking names. Issue 34 should be in stores a week after this issue. Lot's of cool stuff going on. Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree are doing fantastic work. Give it a look. Also in stores around this time, The hardcover containing issues 14-24 and the TPB containing 25-30. So if you get "INVINCIBLE: The Ultimate Collection" volumes 1 and 2 and the volume 5 TPB you'll just need to get issues 31-34 in back issues and you'll have it all! Hooray!!

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is continuing with its monthly reprints. Issue 9, out soon, even includes a new 10-page section that's never been published. So if you're looking for NEW Battle Pope action, this is the only place to get it... at least until next year or so... hint, hint. Honor thy father and mother!

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP is kicking into high gear leading up to the super-cool issue 25! The current arc, Freedom Ring is in the middle of it's run, with issue 22 out soon where we introduce the world to IRON MANIAC. It's a hoot! Also in stores soon, Marvel Team-Up Vol. 3: League of Losers, featuring issue 14, the Spider-Man/Invincible team-up! Don't miss it a second time! Eat your vegetables!

ITEM! MARVEL ZOMBIES is getting collected in AUGUST in an oversized hardcover the likes of which the world has never seen. It features a brand-spanking-new cover by Arthur Suydam and will even feature EVERY COVER DONE for the series. It also includes the actual comic, written by yours truly with art by Sean Philips. I'm told it's quite good... but who believes my mom anyway? Seeing is believing!

ITEM! My run on ULTIMATE X-MEN continues! What does the future hold for Magician? What does Jean Gray do now that she knows what she knows about The Phoenix? All these answers and more questions asked in MAGICAL running through issues 72-74 featuring art by Tom Raney. Fight the power!

ITEM! It was just announced that I'm doing yet another series for Marvel. This time it's THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN! For those of you thinking Ant-Man isn't the coolest character in the world, don't worry, this series is going to be so off the wall you won't even notice. It's going to be a blast. And for those of you who love Ant-Man more than life itself. This is the book for you, we're going to be showing this guy the respect and care he deserves. Also, the art team is Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree on pencils, inks and colors. So you know it's going to be a SOLID book. Don't count your chickens until they're hatched!

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hidey Ho, girls and boys! Welcome to ye old letters column!

We've got a special treat for you this issue, courtesy of Ed Brubaker, Sean Phillips & Val Staples but I'll get to that at the end of the letters column.

In other news Clayburn Moore is going to be doing some Walking Dead mini-statues of zombies. The first two should be in stores for the Christmas season. I've seen them and they're damn cool. Based on some of Charlie's coolest zombies from the book. I think he's going to do a series of these along with the main statue, so be on the lookout for more news coming soon.

In stores already is The Walking Dead BOOK ONE Hardcover--containing issues 1-12 for the low price of \$29.99. Be sure to pick up your copy today!

Now maybe I should answer some mail. What do YOU think?

Dear Dead Walkers,

I would love to see something like this in the walking dead.

I had a mind opening experience recently the best place any survivor could go is a mountainous old growth forest type region.

For your information I am a gun owner and I recently took a 2 mile vertical hike up a mountain in full tactical gear wielding an AK47, SKS, and a .22 rifle they are all legal of course and in our party I took the AK hehe it was some good endurance training though it took 5 hours round trip just to hike 2 miles up the mountain slope. Gilded with fallen and rotting trees some of which clog up and impede passage up the mountain to the point you have to walk across a log suspended 12 feet in the air held up by several other fallen logs which may extend over 200 feet.

The point is that the time it takes for a person to reach the summit in an area where there are no roads or trails is far more strenuous on the body for a living and a dead person then the areas the story has taken place in.

Frankly if a couple hundred Roamers tried to catch my ass well trying to walk up the steep mountain forest hills I would more then likely just have to sit back and watch em break there necks because there would be so much stuff they would have to jump and walk over just to get 30 feet up that hill that I pretty much could stand to not fire one shot in the process then there is the matter of how many people lived in the surrounding towns prior to the outbreak.

Even if they did manage to find you they would have to somehow develop the agility to walk across fallen logs and then there is the matter of the rotting logs that they may have to pass over well this whole time they are focusing on getting to the meat which is barreling up the hill at due speed so they would eventually end up breaking their legs, necks etc by the hundreds.

So I think it would stand that a centralization of mountain dwellers would stand to be the more effective solution to survivors at least for people in Southern Washington anyways hehe. Just gets me chuckling trying to picture a hoarde of those Mall Rat wannabes trying to get me up there I'd be more worried about mountain lions, and elk cause those boys are nasty.

Finally I'd like to say your drawings of the AK47 were superb the Stocks especially the folding stock AKs in the comic looked very real. Also despite that AK47s normally fire an ammunition type that's normally not found made in the US some are re-chambered to fire an American made cartridge and the AK47 seldom ever jams making it a practically superb gun to have in this situation. I've put at least 2000 rounds through my AK47 and it still works great and never once has jammed up on me although I clean it vigorously after every 100 rounds. My AK 47 has polymer black hand guard cover and the Stock is a Telescopic to adjust to different lengths so it looks more like an M16 as well as sounds since it fires the .223 remington cartridge so its far less recognizable to the untrained eye.

Thank you Sincerely
Epave Omorocva

PS I Know some of my sentences are run ons sorry.

After all this gun talk, I thought about making some snide remark about you loving guns a bit to much. But, y'know... after all this

gun talk, I decided that probably wasn't the best idea.

Good letter.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm 27 years old and have never written a fan letter to anybody for ANYTHING before, but after reading "Letter Hacks" in issue #27, I finally felt compelled to do so. Simply put -- TWD is awesome. Undeniably cool. In fact, I think its absolutely the best comic out there today, with your INVINCIBLE being a close second. Impeccable combination of story and art in both books. Congrats, some amazing stuff.

The check's in the mail.

I think you're single-handedly, along with your great staff of artists, making Image Comics cutting edge again. You've brought back the energy and excitement that was there when SPAWN and SAVAGE DRAGON debuted and blew everybody's minds. Also, having discovered you through TWD, I've been baffled to find out how many other books you actually write! Jeez! You're a machine! Currently though, I think TWD and INVINCIBLE are your masterpieces.

You didn't like Jubilee? What about Space Ace?

Having said that, and not wanting to belabor an already much-talked about point, I do want to point out that I think I prefer Tony Moore's jaw-dropping detail to Charlie Adlard's looser-yet-still-very-stylish approach. Of course I think Mr. Adlard is extremely talented and I can understand the pressure you guys have to meet deadlines and such, but sometimes I do long for a bit more refinement. I think the book's story and art were on equal footing back in Tony's day, whereas now I think the writing is kind of the main draw. Not really a complaint, just an observation. Hope it doesn't annoy you.

Not at all. You can still get Tony's work over at Exterminators from DC/Vertigo and the first four issues of Fear Agent from Image. I don't agree with you, I think Charlie is doing a fantastic job (and I'm not alone--Eisner nomination and all) but I don't mind you voicing your opinion.

Okay, I guess that's about it. I don't really want to ask you any crazy zombie trivia questions or try to find out what's gonna happen next cause, well...isn't that kind of ruining the surprise? I kind of don't get why people ask that kind of stuff.

Oh shit, wait...I DO have two stupid questions!!

1. If a zombie bit somebody who was smoking weed, would the zombie get stoned? Would the THC be able to do any damage to their already messed up zombie brains?

Actually, if a zombie bites someone who's smoking weed he turns into a toad... until he's kissed by a virgin princess... then he turns into a handsome zombie and she gets genital warts.

2. Have you seen the movie "Grandma's Boy"? It was released in January and kind of came and went pretty quickly. Just wondering cause I directed it and I think you're cool and if you liked it I'd be psyched. If you did see it and hated it -- no hard feelings, I'll still buy your books. If you haven't seen it, it comes out on DVD May 9th. Its basically about video games, grandmothers, and marijuana. Fun for the whole family! Just like your zombie stories!

Best of luck to you sir, please keep up the great work.
Nicholaus Goossen

Heh, really? That's pretty cool. I haven't seen the movie, but I wanted to. I'm a huge Adam Sandler fan, and I was looking forward to seeing the movie that was basically all the guys from his films in a movie by themselves.

Was it any good?

I'll have to check that out. Thanks for writing.

Hey,
Don't know if was intentional, but thanks for the shout out to my hometown of Fayetteville, Georgia on the roadsign in Walking Dead #27. Never thought I'd see it mentioned anywhere in the real world, much less in one of my favorite comic books. It's a shame Rick & company chose Woodbury instead -- Fayetteville definitely would've benefited from the addition of some zombies. Well, besides the ones that already live there and drive SUVs.

Yours,
Josh Hammonds

You can thank the map I referenced for the story to find out what would be where on the street.

Go, Fayetteville.

Hey Mr. Kirkman,

A couple of days after sending you my first fan letter ever, I've been having panic attacks that what I wrote was slightly offensive. I didn't mean to critique Adlard or your book that much. I felt I went a little over the line. Again, I think TWD is the best comic on the planet right now, so....please, don't be pissed or annoyed. Hopefully with all the other letters you get mine will seem tame. I did think my "Can a zombie get stoned?" question was kinda funny though.

Thanks again.
Nicholaus Goossen

No worries, mister Hollywood movie director. I wasn't offended at all. Charlie on the other hand, burnt all his copies of the Grandma's Boy DVD... he owned six copies... he loved that movie... until you wrote your letter.

Hi, Kirkman!

I just finished issue 27. A bit of a slow issue, but clearly building to something more. The governor almost got me thinking he was all right, but something always seemed a bit odd about this new groups, which was finally confirmed on the last page. I don't understand why they would have a bunch of biters around their fighting arena... If it's just people fighting, what's the point of the biters? Maybe we'll see the fight next issue and it'll be more clear... And I really liked how the new people have a different name for the zombies than the rest of the characters. Nice attention to detail there!

I'm trying. I think by now you know why the zombies are there-- to make the fights more intense!

One thing I don't get is how the people in the jail never noticed this town before. If they've been having these fights at night with their big lights on, wouldn't our regular crew in the prison see the glow in the distance and try to go investigate it? With no light anywhere else in the area, I'd think the lights would be easy to see, even from a few miles away...

There are some large wooded areas in-between them... and they're about four miles away if I recall... it's feasible they didn't see them.

I guess I don't have much to say this time, but thanks for another nice issue. Seems like we should get some nice action in the next couple issues when Tyreese and the rest try to find out what happened to Rick, Michonne, and Glenn.

Jim Amato

I hope we didn't let you down in the action department.

One more thing I forgot... I'm amazed at how many people seem to not read your letters page. Fans are always clamoring for letters to be printed in comics, but when someone finally does it, they don't even read them! I was shocked how many letters you got from people that sounded like they just realized the title of the book wasn't about the zombies after all. How many times did you tell us that in your letters page?!? Well, I for one, read every letter you print! It takes me a hell of a long time, but I really enjoy reading them all.

Thanks,
Jim Amato

Thanks, sometimes I feel like I write these things for NOTHING. I do know a good bit of people read them though... so it's okay.

Mr. Kirkman,

The following is a short list of comments to both you, and the readers of The Walking Dead:

#1) The Walking Dead is the best comics in the market today. Great story, great art, no ads, and no bullshit alt/exclusive covers. It's almost perfect. I will continue to buy and read TWD until its end. Keep up the good work.

#2) The only complaint I have is the about the late TWD books. I know you're a busy man, but you've developed a huge fan following for TWD (myself included) who get very disappointed when an issue arrives on stands weeks after its due. Although I will admit that the wait makes the book twice as satisfying to read, I would still like to see the book get back on schedule as long as there is no quality lost to do so.

We're getting on time, don't worry.

This ones for the readers:

#3) Dear Readers of TWD, STOP TELLING ROBERT WHAT HE SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T DO IN HIS OWN BOOK! If he wanted suggestions of what to do next, he'd ask. Go write your own fucking book. If Robert wants them to stay in the prison, then they're staying in the prison. If Robert doesn't want zombie animals, then there's not going to be any. If Robert doesn't want to reveal how the zombie virus started, then its never going to be revealed. If Robert doesn't want Duane and Morgan to show up again, then they will never show up. Robert has done an excellent job on this book WITHOUT your help, so lets let him continue. Just read the damn book and enjoy it.

one (possibly dumb) question:

#4) How far ahead do you have TWD written? Up to issue 36? 50? 250?

Thus ends my list. Please be so kind as to print this letter in a future issue.

Thanks,
JAKEtheSNAKE

I'm usually barely an issue ahead of Charlie script wise. Over the next year I'm going to try to get a little further ahead. I've got the book plotted FAR past that... but scripting... I'm writing 35 when he finishes 34 and so on.

Well, I'm trying to send an email to you to see if I'm any more successful in getting it printed than the hand written one that I sent to you that took a long time to write. Maybe I shouldn't have bashed Bendis in that letter after all, jeez I didn't know he was your buddy.

You kidding? I HATE Bendis.

I've stated here before that I don't have an intern or anything and I DO NOT have time to retype hand written or typed mailed-in fan letters... so I just don't print them. I read them... but I just don't have the resources to print them. Thanks for emailing this one.

Anyway, I'm loving this current arc of the series very much. It was afraid Glenn (who by far is the most likeable character in the book) was gonna bite it at any moment. The tension was palpable. Please don't kill him, please! And can't wait to see if they force Rick or Glenn to fight the zombies in their SWAT outfit! Poor guys.

Only time will tell.

So, I'm loving the book, and loved what you did with Marvel Zombies. Great covers, great art, great ending! Man this was a great story for you. A friend of mine suggested that it could have been three issues, but I disagree. Just right amount of length, and that ending was totally awesome. Which was your favorite cover so far? I can't wait to get that FF #1 cover.

My favorite was the X-Men #1 cover. That book had my favorite ending that I've written... I was really proud of how I ended that mini. Some people didn't like the ending... and I think those people have no SOUL.

After picking that up, I decided to finally read Invincible and bought the hardcover to volume 1. Awesome. Love it, especially Atom Eve. Please get Clay Moore to do a sculpt of her (oh, and I'm extremely excited about him doing a walking dead statue, made my day). I'm already committed to buying that awesome Invincible statue. And then I went out and bought Marvel Team Up vol 1 tpb. Good clean fun. Yeah, not the greatest stuff, but I liked it, and will pick up the rest. Now all I gotta do is pick up Marvel Knights 2099 trade, and didn't you do FF: Foes?

Yes, I did all that stuff. Thanks for the purchases.

Finally, please let us know before hand about anything like the Image Holiday Special story. I had no clue you had a walking dead story, and need to buy it now. I bought the Deluxe hardcover and been loving it man. Great way to read it in extra large pages.

I'm SURE I mentioned that in the letters column. How ELSE would I let you know? You guys really should read this stuff... I can't just call you at home, not ALL of you at least.

Thanks for some great stories, Robert, and I gotta say the Walking Dead is my favorite series of all. Thanks to you I started buying comics again.

Michael
Dallas, TX

Thanks man, it's good to have you.

Letter Hacks,

Zombies, but then, that's not really what the book is about is it? That's just the setting, that's part of the pitch. It allows the human psyche to be examined, for a bunch of chit chat and human drama. But hey, it's cool, there's zombies!

Did I mention Kirkman sucks? No, must have been a letter to Invincible. Hadn't written any letters in a while, the books have been too damn good. Changes in artistic teams didn't matter, Kirkman's stories were just too good. And heck, the new artists rock. Yes they do. And Kirkman doesn't suck at all!

But specifically, Walking Dead. The book is consistent, the drama feels very real and you get lost in the book during the time you are reading an issue. It's kind of disappointing when, having read it, you look at your pile of comics (if you're lucky to have that many GOOD comics) and know that there's nothing in the batch like it.

Sure there are plenty of comics aping Bendis and having the characters yap more than they do anything else, but that's not what Walking Dead is about. You just don't get the same satisfaction anywhere else.

There's always action and what's different is that you see the characters often at a loss as to what to do next. That decision is an important one given their predicament. And it's always given to us straight as they - like we would - try to figure out solutions given the resources at hand and the risk to them.

What a cool, often deep read.

Regards,
Thad Branco

Thanks for the kind words.

Dear Robert,
I love your book and I believe in one of your letter pages you wrote that Charlie sold some of the pages of original art. I was just wondering if he has some to sell or if he sells them through a website of some sort. I'm trying not to be picky, but I would love to have one of them with Rick and a zombie on one and they wouldn't have to be on the same panel necessary. There's no rush I know your busy writing all of those books, so whenever you get time to find out or tell Charlie to contact me. I would appreciate it.

Thank You for your time
Cary Shenk

Charlie Adlard's original art can be purchased at WWW.SPLASHPAGEART.COM at some fairly reasonable prices.

Hey,

Just finished reading issue 27. Quite a lot happening there. One thing did bother me though. Why doesn't Rick, Michonne, or even Glenn say "Hey, what if these people aren't friendly? Maybe we shouldn't be chasing after them.." When they meet these people, I half expected one of them to just start spilling everything about their camp at the prison, which fortunately Michonne was smart enough to head that off. This kind of makes me wonder though if any of these people ever watched a zombie movie themselves. I don't recall any of them ever referencing any. If I were a survivor in a zombie situation I would often be saying things like "This is what they did in Dawn of the Dead." or "Hey, a guy got himself killed like that in 28 days later."

How crappy would this comic be if someone said "Let's be careful, this never worked in Dawn of the Dead." I mean REALLY? So no, nobody in this book as seen a zombie movie, or at least... they don't comment on it. If you were lost in the woods, chased by bears... and you came upon a cabin with smoke coming out of the top, you'd beat on the door and ask for help, glad that you've encountered another human. Is that SAFE? No, but I think 90% of us would just want that human contact and wouldn't really think about the dangers. Same thing here. They haven't encountered any evil humans yet. By nature we do seem to band together in times of great tragedy. It's only natural that what we, from the outside, view as naïve and optimistic is really just human nature.

NEXT time, though... they'll be a little weary of any new humans they encounter--if they survive this one.

Anyways, so I expect Tyreese will be leading some sort of rescue mission in future issues...? I'll be excited to see what happens next. I was worried things were going to get real dull in the prison, though they never really did. The riot suits were a nice touch.

Tyreese went out on his own, for reasons that are yet to be revealed.

BTW, I wrote you guys note once before and you published it. So this is actually not my first time writing to a comic book. It's my second.. and I do not think I am the Greg T. you think I am, but hey s'ok.

Greg T.

How many Greg Thompson's could there be?

Okay, I'm going to forego the usual "shilling session" to talk about someone ELSE'S book. Yeah, I know, I'm as shocked as you guys are... but bear with me here.

Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips are all famous and stuff. You know them, right? They did SLEEPER together over at DC/ WILDSTORM and Ed's gone on to do Daredevil, Captain America and Uncanny X-Men at Marvel. Sean is the brilliant artist who made MARVEL ZOMBIES look so pretty. They're both talented S.O.B.s and they have a new book coming out.

CRIMINAL, I'm told, is along the lines of SLEEPER in tone. It follows the bad guys, the Criminals, as they do Criminal stuff--it's going to be sweet. And they've even got my talented colorist friend Val (Battle Pope, X-Men: Deadly Genesis) Staples on colors. I'm really looking forward to it, so we're running a keen preview here in the book--and in FULL COLOR no less.

But enough from me--lets hear it from the horses mouth himself... Ed Brubaker!

*Hey Walking Deadheads,
Before I launch into my brief spiel, let me thank Robert Kirkman for opening up his book like this for me, and in color, even. Okay Robert, I'll name my first son Ben Reilly Brubaker, but I still don't understand why... So, the next five pages are what I like to call our movie trailer on paper for CRIMINAL. Imagine all the caption boxes as voice-over dialog and you'll see what I mean... But what else can I tell you about CRIMINAL? That this is the book I've been waiting to do for years and years, for one. I've had most of the stories that'll appear in this comic mapped out for a long time, and have been building bits and pieces of the entire 'world' of the series for a few years now in my notebook. The goal is to create a new kind of crime comic, a book that feels as much like a mood as it does a plot. To show brief glimpses of lives lived underground, on the run from the law. I've always been drawn towards that kind of material. You can see it in much of my work on books like Daredevil, Gotham Central, or Sleeper. But with CRIMINAL, along with the incredibly talented Sean Phillips (who you all know from MARVEL ZOMBIES) and ably assisted by colorist Val Staples, I've created a cast of characters and a book that can contain any kind of story I want to tell with them - from heist stories, to prison breakouts, to revenge dramas, and anything in between. And we're trying to make the monthly comics themselves extra, something worth your money and your time. So, beyond the continuing stories that appear each issue, there will also be back-up stories and extras, articles by myself and other writers about the crime genre, and even the occasional deleted scene. I think it's going to be a blast, and I hope you'll join us for it -- we launch this October, from Marvel's Icon label, so please tell your local retailer and look for us on the shelves.*

-Ed Brubaker

Well, I know I'M excited, and if you're not--behold the CRIMINAL PREVIEW starting on the next page. And be sure to PREORDER your copy of CRIMINAL #1, in stores THIS OCTOBER from Marvel's ICON COMICS.

That's it for this month. See you all back here in 30 days or less.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hey look! Issue 31.

Uh... not a lot of free time these days... just got back from San Diego (it was great meeting you). So... let's answer some MAIL!

Woo hoo!

I received the first collection of comics as a gift last december, and read them a month ago out of boredom, I was very taken with your view of a giant zombie apocolypse, the comic is very fast and very witty, but my favorite part would be the very human characters.

Amazingly, I even tracked down a comic book shop so I could find out what happens, it wasn't quite how I pictured a comic book shop would be like, for one, it was very well lit and the staff was nothing if not helpful, but the rest was exactly how I pictured it, in that a large fraction of the patrons were overweight and kept staring at my chest and mumbling.

In all fairness--you should admit that probably happens in other places as well, right?

I realize you must get a lot of mail, so I doubt this will be read, and I very much doubt I'll ever get a reply, but I thought I would take the time to tell you that you are doing a great job with your comic book and it is very enjoyable.

Also, I realize the mail account name "burnumall" sounds a bit weird, it's a friend's email account, I'm curious as to exactly what it means but I'm too embarrassed to ask.

-Girl who didn't sign her email

Well, you'll be happy to know I emailed your friend and she told me it has something to do with ancient burial rites and funerary incantations. It all sounded a little fruity to me.

Dear Roberto Kirkenhiem IV,

You're gunna off Glenn aren't ya? It ain't gunna

be rick or Mich, 'cause they're fighters who don't go down like punks. (unless mich sacrifices herself for the good of the others... which I doubt she would do seeing as she's still a relatively new character)

Though if they end up having to fight each other in the arena, I think you need to include with each copy a burnt CD with the Star Trek fight music.

Anyway, on to more pressing matters.

1) I dunno how Rick and the gang are gunna get out of THIS sticky situation (in reference to issue 27 since I know these don't get printed for like 3 issues)

This isn't a question! Grrr.

2) What was the first thing you ever got published, and how did you feel? Your work is so good that it's inspired me to write my own comic books. So far i've got my own zombie series planned, along with a superhero trade and what i'm told is a semi cheesy drama about a guy who has a type writer that can write dreams. Oh, and I almost forgot, but I've got a batman story arch that i'd love to do sometime, but i'd imagine i'd have to be a total success or DC would have to be completely desperate before they let me come within 10 feet of a batman script.

My first published work was the self-published Battle Pope (being reprinted in color by Image right now). It was a great feeling to get that printed comic and hold it in my hands... and I still feel the same way whenever I get a new issue of anything I work on. I truly love this job.

The type writer one is the shortest of the three so i'm going to try and get that published first.

Good luck.

anyway keep up the good work, lovin' it all, Invincible, marvel zombies, Battle Pope especially.

-Phil

Oh, see--you already knew about Battle Pope.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
I am writing this letter to fulfill your female quotient...that's right... I'm a girl. A girl who reads comics...and drools over zombies. But I digress...I read this article in the NY Times a while back, in the fashion section, no less, about the globalization of zombies...I just want to make sure that WD, via the transitive properties, doesn't become lame. Anyway, I really have been enjoying the female characters...Michonne seems interesting...let's see what happens there...Carol seems like she's suffering from PTSD but I hope it's something more devastatingly interesting like bipolar or schizophrenia. I feel like everyone in WD could carry the story on their own...could have their own spin-off...except maybe Dale..... and, I mean, I love what's his face... but Lori is hardcore. She's going to give birth au natural! Boy or Girl? Any names? How about Viscera?

Love,
Leslie

PS. (my gentleman friend will die if you print this)

Consider your gentleman friend DEAD! You don't like Dale? What's wrong with him? Carol probably does have something wrong with her--but y'know... who's there who could diagnose something like that? Thanks for reading.

Just wanted to thank you guys for the awesome story that The Walking Dead is.
Your story is the reason I am awake at one in the morning reading with a flashlight and keeping a fire axe at close reach :)

That and the fact that you didn't pay the electric bill, right?

I've not felt this kind of chills since I first read Stephen Kings' The Shining.

Thanks again and keep up the excellent work. I am hungry for more.

Best regards from Iceland
Siggi Ben :)

Thanks, and keep it real! Have fun in Iceland.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me start by saying I really love The Walking

Dead comics. We used to be on Ebay comic boards and now are on a forum called The Comics Corral and someone pointed out this comic to my husband, who in turn, bought them for me. The series was at issue 19 when he bought the first trade paperback. I fell in love with it. I now not only own all the trade paper backs, but I am getting the ongoing issues, too.

I have no complaints about the story and think it is great. The only suggestion that I have is to make it a TV Show (HBO/Showtime) I don't think they could do justice in a 2-3 hour movie, but an on going series would be great.

TV show, huh? That's a good suggestion. I'll get right on that.

I also am really hoping we can make it to the Comic Con in San Diego so I can meet you. By the way my hubby loves The Walking Dead, too. He mainly collects Superhero Comics. We have thought about checking out Invincible, but we haven't had the chance yet. He does get Ultimate X-Men and Marvel Team-Up. The ONLY complaint is we did order The Walking Dead Hard Cover 1-24 and all we got was the shaft as is sold out. LOL.

Thank you so much for this comic(series).

Thanks,
Kelly Garcia

Wow... is that three out of the first five emails that are girls? Weird. Lotsa ladies in this issue's letters column. Right on.

DUDE!

I hadn't been to my LCS for a while so when I went I had issues 25, 26 & 27 waiting for me so I thought this would be a good opportunity to reread them all from # 1, so I did, and I found some things hopefully you can help me with....

1. In #1 I noticed the escaped jailbird shooting at Rick and Shane looks a lot like a skinny Axel, who just happens to be in jail for armed robbery. Is this a coincidence, or have I ruined where you are going with the Axel plot? Sorry if I have.

Nope, that's just a coincidence... because I'm a hack. He doesn't look THAT much like Axel though.

2. In #15 Thomas says to Patricia he saw her with Otis and asks if it's her boyfriend. A few pages later when Rick leaves to shoot zombie Shane, Lori wonders if he is going to check on Otis at the farm since they haven't seen him since they left the farm, and he doesn't show up at the jail until Michonne does in #19. So my question is, how did Thomas see Otis? Is this an oversight on your part, 'cause it doesn't add up?

These aren't the droids you're looking for. I think Otis was at the prison briefly dropping

off supplies and Lori hadn't seen him. Or something. I'd have to check out the issues... I'm not convinced there is a discrepancy.

3. With all these couples hooking up and having sex, how come no one else is getting pregnant? There's been no talk about birth control or anything, and I thought Hershel would of had a talk to Maggie about it.

I'm sure there's a condom or two lying around the prison somewhere. Little things like this, I feel, are better left assumed and not really dealt with. I mean... where are they getting toothpaste? Is that just in the prison? Did it run out? What about... candles? Or lightbulbs? Did Glenn really steal enough batteries for the flashlights to still be working? It'd be boring if I took the time to explain all that stuff.

4. I know Axel and Tyreese didn't see the helicopter, but how did they not hear it? You can usually hear them way before you can actually see them.

Maybe they we're singing really loud to each other--or were inside the prison, playing basketball--or were yelling at someone. There's any number of excuses... some of them aren't even silly.

5. Since people can turn into a zombie even from deaths non zombie bite related, does that mean the zombie plague/incident started with some kind of chemical warfare or something? Obviously the air/oxygen on earth has been altered. Is this correct? How did you come up with this idea? I've never seen this kind of thing in the Zombie genre where they turn without being bitten.

The origins of the zombie plague are unknown and will probably remain that way... but yeah--it's something even the living are infected with.

I had a few more queries the other day but I can't think of them now....

Sorry about that.

Anyway, keep up the great work. I am loving The Walking Dead. How much you ask? Well, I've been buying every Batman comic for 19 years and they've never taken second place on my pile to be read before, so CONGRATS!!!

Deakin Gilford
Australia

Awesome--thanks for writing.

Letter Hacks,

The reason I am writing is that your fans have written in about some really good zombie stories/movies that I normally wouldn't have known about. Undead, The Zombie Survival Guide, Reign of the Dead, and The Rising/City of the Dead all

come to mind. I have no plans to stop buying this comic until the aliens are introduced, but I still seek zombie entertainment between your books. Please encourage your readers to write in about other stories in the genre.

The Walking Dead story is still going strong. I Think you will be able to do a lot with the 2nd group of survivors introduced in 27. Keep up the great work.

Mike Gineman

Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

You are the man! This is the best Zombie comic ever made! I can't get enough of the great story telling and the art is the best B/W I have seen. I hope this title is leading its way to at least a trilogy of The Walking Dead movies. I have to say that from watching NOLD when I was a kid I grew up with an irrational fear of dead people climbing out of graves and attacking me. Now I am thrilled about all things zombie related and it seems the world is seeing a new age of Zombie interest. Here's to another generation of kids growing up with the fear of the dead. Lastly, is it possible to have readers submit a list of their favorite zombie movies and you could use this info to make a: The Walking Dead Fans Top 25 Zombie Movies Ever list in a future issue? Thanks!

-Some guy who didn't sign his email

That's not a bad idea. Why don't you letter writers start sending in obscure recommendations? I mean... we all know the top TEN zombie movies... or the top ten well known zombie movies... but what about the obscure ones. Snap to it!

Dear Kirkman,

Just thought I would write to give you my props, to ask some questions and voice a complaint.

1. I was getting pretty restless while all of the women in the comic were being pansies, I mean sure, they helped out when they needed to but most of the time they just sat back, worried, complained and had sex with there male counterparts. I was very excited when you brought in Michonne a strong female character. I'm interested in seeing if or how the other female characters react to someone with such a different outlook. Are they going to get up and stop being pansies, or just whine and complain about how much Michonne is not a pansy?

They're probably going to wash clothes and do dishes... and behave. Seriously though (I'm not sexist) the point of the book (or one of them at least) is that the characters grow and change as time goes on. You've got to start somewhere and as time goes on I think you'll see all the characters, female and male, evolve to survive in this zombie-filled

world. They won't be frail and helpless much longer (not that they totally were before). Sigh... I should have never killed Donna.

2. In issues 26 and 27 the prospect of feeding the dead to the zombies is brought into the story line... This just doesn't make sense to me. If soon after you die you become a zombie, and zombies don't eat other zombies then could you really shoot someone, chop them up, put them into a sack then feed them to a zombie? I don't think so... Zombies wouldn't be interested in a cold severed arm, it takes the primal hunting instinct out of the picture! I guess it's pointless for me to bring this up now, but eh...

There is a period of time, after a person dies, before the body starts to decompose. As shown in issue 29 with The Governor's daughter, after a while... the meat gets old and isn't good... but before then, it's almost as good as eating live meat.

3. Please don't have a zombie baby... maybe a zombie toddler kind of like in Pet Semetary, but no zombie baby.

No zombie baby? We'll see... if Lori EVER has that kid that is...

Thanks for reading my ranting...

Much love,
Lauren Caitlin Ayrey
Olympia, Wa

Man... a whole lot of ladies wrote in this month. That's totally cool.

Starting on the next page--ROCK BOTTOM PREVIEW!

Okay--now for something else--another preview!

Coming in September from AiT/PlanetLar is ROCK BOTTOM a story written by JOE CASEY and drawn by none other than... CHARLIE ADLARD!! That's right kids--our boy has been moonlighting. There's plenty of info on the next page before the preview so I won't bore you with details--GO CHECK IT OUT! And make sure you tell your retailer you want this book.

Now I think it's time for me to do a little shilling. I mean... we've got to do something to keep the lights on right?

ITEM! INVINCIBLE is still kicking ass and taking names. Issue 35 should be in stores a week after this issue. Lot's of cool stuff going on. Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree are doing fantastic work. Give it a look. Also in stores around this time, The hardcover containing issues 14-24 and the TPB containing 25-30. So if you get "INVINCIBLE: The Ultimate Collection" volumes 1 and 2 and the volume 5 TPB you'll just need to get

issues 31-35 in back issues and you'll have it all! Hooray!!

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is continuing with its monthly reprints. Issue 9, out now, even includes a new 10-page section that's never been published. So if you're looking for NEW Battle Pope action, this is the only place to get it... at least until next year or so... hint, hint. Issue 10 is also in stores now... ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP is kicking into high gear leading up to the super-cool issue 25! The current arc, Freedom Ring is in the middle of it's run, with issue 22 out soon where we introduce the world to IRON MANIAC. It's a hoot! Also in stores soon, Marvel Team-Up Vol. 3: League of Losers, featuring issue 14, the Spider-Man/Invincible team-up! Don't miss it a second time! Eat your vegetables!

ITEM! MARVEL ZOMBIES is getting collected in AUGUST in an oversized hardcover the likes of which the world has never seen. It features a brand-spanking-new cover by Arthur Suydam and will even feature EVERY COVER DONE for the series. It also includes the actual comic, written by yours truly with art by Sean Philips. I'm told it's quite good... but who believes my mom anyway? Seeing is believing!

ITEM! My run on ULTIMATE X-MEN continues! What does the future hold for Magician? What does Jean Gray do now that she knows what she knows about The Phoenix? All these answers and more questions asked in MAGICAL running through issues 72-74 featuring art by Tom Raney. Fight the power! Hot new artist Ben Oliver returns for issue 75--which features the introduction of ULTIMATE CABLE! LOOK OUT!

ITEM! It was just announced that I'm doing yet another series for Marvel. This time it's THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN! For those of you thinking Ant-Man isn't the coolest character in the world, don't worry, this series is going to be so off the wall you won't even notice. It's going to be a blast. And for those of you who love Ant-Man more than life itself. This is the book for you, we're going to be showing this guy the respect and care he deserves. Also, the art team is Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree on pencils, inks and colors. So you know it's going to be a SOLID book. Don't count your chickens until they're hatched!

That's it for this issue. See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Issue 32 is here, people! The zombie movie that never ends just keeps on not ending and I, for one, couldn't be happier.

Charlie and Cliff have really outdone themselves on this issue. Just when you think these two couldn't do a better job they just come out and blow you away! Nice job, guys.

If you haven't pre-ordered your Walking Dead busts from your local comic shop or from csmooresstudio.com please do so NOW--you will NOT be disappointed. Sculptor-supreme did an AMAZING job on these and you don't want to miss them.

Now let's answer some damn letters!

Dear Bob,

First off I absolutely love this comic, I just started reading them a little less than a month ago and I'm hooked. I find myself yearning for the next one to come out. Now with the questions and comments.

1. I was relieved when Rick had gotten his bad hand chopped off, because other wise he would be kinda useless for a while.

Yeah, and now we don't have to make sure he doesn't USE that hand by accident...

2. In issue #28 when the Govenor was watching the zombies eating the corpses was that a zombie cheerleader at the far right corner of the room.

Could be.

3. If Lori had a miscarriage would the baby become a zombie baby and A) Eat her from the inside out or B) Will she give birth to a zombie baby that would attack Hershel upon delivery.

Possibly BOTH! You never know.

Keep up the good work!!
Matt M.

P.S. Please print my letter!!

Will do!

Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead 29. I've previously read the rest of the series, except 28 which I missed. Until now I've enjoyed the series, at least in as much as one can enjoy a series full of heartbreak and misery.

Sadly, I think you've made a huge misstep with this last issue. It isn't gory or sad or heartbreaking. It is vile. It is virtually a celebration of cruelty. It was difficult for me to get through the whole issue.

Before you dismiss this as just another silly moralistic diatribe, let me tell you about myself. I'm your standard thirty-something Canadian atheist at the liberal end of the liberal spectrum. You won't find a more vociferous defender of freedom of expression. I guess what worries me is that if a work doesn't have any meaning or message (which this issue clearly does not), then all that's left is it's value as entertainment. It makes me cringe to think that the material you present in this issue might be anyone's idea of entertainment.

Why am I bothering to write this? I guess I was fairly shocked (I just finished reading it). I made reconsider reading anything you

write, although I'll still be picking up Invincible and I'll give Ant-man a shot. Anyway, I know that if I was writing something I'd want to know when I'd made an impact on someone either way, so there you go. For the sake of your remaining readers (you won't count me among them), I hope you can right the ship on future issues.

Sincerely,
Alan Brown

This is a harsh world and harsh things are going to happen to the characters. If you can't handle what happened to Michonne, it's a good thing you're getting off the crazy ride now because I'm sure there are worse things ahead.

Robert,

I was never into comics even as a kid--never followed a monthly book--never really gave a rat's fanny about them until a friend introduced me to Gaiman's Sandman, which got me interested in the art form, but I still never bought a monthly book. Never really cared about zombies, either. They just didn't interest me.

Considering, then, my apathy toward both comics and zombies, the fact that I am now a slaving Walking Dead addict who buys the monthly books speaks volumes for your talents and those of Messrs. Adlard and Rathburn. That really ought to make you proud.

Now on to the questions.

You've mentioned in previous Letter Hacks columns that you have no plans to reveal the origin of the zombie plague, which is, I think, a good move--but as time goes by, are we going to learn more about them? Thus far, we know that the zombies are a) dead; b) ravenous; c) retain no memory of their prior lives, nor any brain functions beyond "eat" and "chase"; d) divided into two categories--roamers and lurkers, and e) die when their brains are bashed in. I could stand to learn more. Seems to me that if Rick & Co. have the chance to learn more information about them, it's another good device to keep people hooked and buying.

We'll certainly learn more about them--but I'd like to point out that we know even LESS than you state here. I mean, just because our characters have started to refer to them as roamers and lurkers that doesn't mean that there actually are two categories or that there are ONLY two categories. The characters don't have all the answers--they could be wrong about a LOT of things.

Bear in mind that I'm not telling you how to do your job, or suggesting improvements. It's pretty obvious the series doesn't need any, or I wouldn't keep buying the books. Basically, this is just me saying, "I'd like to learn more about the zombies."

Tell me more about the zombies, dammit!

Your devoted fan,
Jim Palmer

P.S. Comics aside, you're a pretty fine writer. The aforementioned Gaiman seems to have transitioned from comics to novels (he should go back to comics)--any plans to do any noncomic writing?

If there is ever a Walking Dead spin-off with other characters in another part of the country... I plan for that

to be a novel series... but I have to learn how to write novels first. So it will probably never happen.

Letter Hacks,

Your work is top of the game, thank you. I can't wait 'til the governor gets axe to the head or torn up by zombies. Charlie, I just bought some of your art over on splashpageart.com after hearing about that in the lettercols. I definitely read the lettercols! Keep 'em goin' if you can, especially with letters like that AK-47 expert... tell us more dude! So how did Charlie draw such a good AK-47... and does Charlie live in England or something... how do you get your scripts to him?

Carrier pigeon, usually. They've got these kick-ass bank tube things that will get stuff over there--but I can't afford those.

What made you choose Moby Dick as the book that woman was reading? I try and balance my pop reading with classics and just started that one like 2 weeks ago. It's frickin hilarious... well okay it is quite funny if you get past the extremely detailed descriptions... I can see how that sucker would be good for illustration. Any favorite classics of yours, Kirkman? TWD is classic, dude. You've got all these characters to handle and I admire that you take the panels to develop them. You've got the long view in mind and yet each issue and story-arc is great in itself.

What's the next con you'll be at? Do you want to expand your readership? I'm thinking elementary school book fairs. Ok maybe not. I'm certainly doing my best. I can't get my wife to read them but I retell each Walking Dead issue to her and she loves it. So thanks for making me sound like a good storyteller. And Charlie, as soon as I get a coffee table, the big hardback edition is going there so everyone can see your rockin' art. You both have really taken the medium to a higher level, so thanks again for your sweat and tears.

Brian Hans

I hope your wife isn't just humoring you. If she really liked it, the lazy broad would READ the things on her own.

As far as cons go. In light of that last comment, I really don't want to appear in any public places where you could find me. That and the fact that I have a small child at home that I really don't enjoy being away from. I'm trying to sit out 2007 completely. But once the boy is old enough, the wife and I will be wanting to take him all over the place--so I'm sure I'll be back on the convention circuit before too long. That is, If I'm still even remotely possible in a year or so.

Dear Kirk-Man:

Big fan of the book. Normally, I am not a big horror genre guy, but TWD is entertaining and original enough to keep me interested month in and month out. Keep up the good work, and I will keep buying it.

Now that the little bit of ass-kissery is out of the way, the main question I have for you is this: Since Bendis seems to love to throw your name in his books, any temptation to do the same in here? Perhaps have one of the survivors rooting through a medical kit and find a tube of Bendis-Brand Hemmrhoidal Cream? Or maybe they sit back and enjoy a nice 40oz bottle of Brubaker Malt Liquor? Who else would you throw in there?

As much as I love seeing my name plastered all through POWERS it REALLY pulls me out of the story when they need to get over to the corner of "Ellis and Brubaker" street or when they meet up with "Detective Joe Quesada EIC of Marvel Comics." I know most of the guys he does at this point and it's distracting to read such specific names all the time. That said, Axel is named after Marvel Editor Axel Alonso--but you'd never know that if I didn't TELL you. So THEY know but it doesn't pull YOU out of the story.

That's how I prefer to do things. Bendis is a hack.

Anyways, thanks for reading this email. Missed you at Wizard World Chicago, maybe next year?

Peace,
Andy Jonathan.

2008 would be the soonest you'll see me at Chicago again.

Dear Robert,

I'm still fairly new to the book, and there are a lot of characters to keep track of: you mind killing some of them off? Rick, I got. And Michonne...Carol is blonde, right? I think I wrote a mail recently asking you some questions, but it might not have gone through. One question was basically: What does God think about the whole alien/ zombie take-over of Earth? I mean he kind of let it happen, right?

God is make believe in the world of The Walking Dead.

How come none of the characters at the prison ever pray?

I'm sure Hershel does... maybe more. I just haven't shown that yet... or, actually... I seem to recall showing Hershel pray at LEAST once.

Another question: How much does it take to kill one of the zombies? Or are they even killable? They're kind of dead already too, right? And with so many dead zombies around how come there's no smell?

There's a smell, but I imagine you'd get used to it after a while. Kill the brain and you kill the zombie.

3) Why are you wrapping up Marvel Team-up? Hopefully to go on to do bigger and better(Captain America) things (again), right?

I'm wrapping up Marvel Team-Up because it's a hard (but fun) book to write and I'd like to move on to other things. It was going to continue, they were actually talking to a big name creator about coming on with 25 at one point--which would have been cool, but sales were so low they decided to end it.

Your mailing address says Lexington, Kentucky? You don't really live there, do you?

I live CLOSE to Lexington. I need to change that P.O. Box...

How come there are no flashbacks in TWD? To b4 the plague--is it considered a plague?--I mean. I think it would be fun.

This isn't LOST--and there's not anything important I've had to show. Issue 7 started with a flashback. Haven't NEEDED to do it since then.

And, finally, I think any good writer or editor would tell you ya got way too many heroes in the book, especially for it being black and white! They mentioned watching a movie in #30; what kinda movies we talkin' about? Recent? How long ago Was the plague anyway?? Maybe Rick and company oughtta just find a tank and go looking for people, huh? Who was the black guy who came back to the prison at the end of #30? I didn't recognize him!! I thought only Rick, Michonne and the meak looking guy went after the helicopter! Nobody called him by name, either: THAT was a BIG help!

It was Tyreese--did I really not say his name? Crud. I do that way too often. Sorry it's hard to follow all the characters. I'll see what I can do about killing some of them off.

I am liking me some Walking Dead though; but I still say Invincible will probably outlast this series in the long run, although both will have pretty healthy runs. How about "Dead End" for a new letters column title, just off the top of my head? How about a riot at the prison? Why am I asking so many questions? What IS Funk-O-Tron, anyway??....

Sincerely
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing!

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I would like to say that I am a fan of your work (Invincible is the best superhero comic in the universe). However, issue #29 of The Walking Dead is making my fandom a bit shaky.

As a man of African descent, I was quite disturbed and appalled by the image of a strong, powerful black woman stripped of her power and humanity by being raped and brutally beaten by a white man not once, but twice in the same issue.

As a man of white people descent, I was quite disturbed when that white dude cut off that other white dudes hand in the previous issue. But this book isn't meant to make people HAPPY--carry on.

I must say that I am way past tired of this sick, pathological white man's portrayal of black women as some kind of chocolate rape fantasy in film (Pam Grier and Halle Berry anyone?) and specifically in comics. I've already had enough of this shit with Storm. Courtesy of Chris Claremont, she left Africa at the behest of a white man, never looked back and has since been a stripped-down, scantily-clad, placed-in-bondage sex toy for the Hellfire Club and Loki. She's also been stroke-off fodder for horny white male readers who dared cry foul when some spear chucker in Wakanda married her and thus stole their ebony S&M fantasy away from them.

I can't be held responsible for how black women have been treated in comics in general. This is a harsh world and harsh things happen to ALL the people in this book. I'm sorry it was the black woman who got raped but I'm ONLY interested in "could or would that happen in such a situation" and if the answer is yes, I don't feel like I did anything wrong.

But I digress. The matter at hand here is *The Walking Dead* #29.

I understand the idea of dramatic effect in storytelling, but goddamn it, did Michonne have to be tied up spread eagle, raped and tortured? Did a strong black woman have to be broken down to the lowest of the low? Is it a case of art imitating life in the sense that if black people are too strong they not only have to be stopped but destroyed? Would you have put any of the white female characters in the book through the same ordeal? I don't think you would have. You never see strong white female characters in comics being dehumanized like that. I guarantee that Michonne's fate will not be shared by Supergirl, Power Girl and certainly not Wonder Woman.

I'm sure Wonder Woman has been tied up and tortured at a couple points in her career. Ever read Phantom Lady (I think that's what the book was called) that woman was white, and she was tied up on the cover of almost EVERY ISSUE.

I assure you this was not an effort to "destroy" a strong black female.

I know that the comic book industry is an ivory tower that is and always has been ruled by white men of varying ages, sensibilities and prejudices. And those prejudices have often shown themselves in the stereotypical and racist depictions of people of color, specifically African people, and, case in point, African women. I'm not letting Chris Claremont off the hook for writing storm as some exotic sex slave. I'm not letting racist-ass Robert Crumb off the hook for Angelfood McSpade. And, I'm not letting you off the hook for your need to portray yet another black woman rape fantasy in The Walking Dead. Whether you did this unconsciously, subconsciously or very consciously I don't know, but you did it and my conscience won't allow me to sit still and not address this. Some people don't know how to call shit when shit needs to be called, but I'm calling you on this, Mr. Kirkman.

You're more than entitled to be pissed off and to tell me your pissed off. But when a white male is raped, I hope you're just as upset. And when a white woman has something bad happen to her... and when anything generally rotten happens to any character in this book... I expect an email.

I'll spare you a lengthy diatribe about how the rape of African women by white men was part of the dehumanization process during slavery, but I will say that I know several African American readers of The Walking Dead and they too have expressed their disgust at the portrayal of a black woman getting raped by a white man. Some have told me that they're not going to read the book anymore. The black female readers that I know have especially expressed their disgust. Even though we all know that Michonne is going to get some medieval-on-your-ass payback on that no-good, Dick Dastardly-looking cracker, it won't begin to make up for her humanity being robbed like that. The image of Michonne's bloody, swollen face is still difficult for me to look at. And I don't want to hear any of that "but the rape was off panel" shit either.

It was SUPPOSED to be difficult for you to look at. It was supposed to make you upset. You're supposed to care about these characters enough to be pissed off when bad things happen to them.

But listen, if I was portraying The Governor as anything but an evil psychotic freak--if he had even the smallest hint of "this is an okay guy" that would be completely racist of me... and I would expect to be "called out." But I had a horrible character do a horrible thing to show how horrible he was.

And it was Michonne because she's a character readers would expect to die--the danger is more real for her. Rick has survived enough that readers think he might be safe. Also, in the scene that lead to her rape--Rick's hand was cut off, Michonne attacked Governor, causing him to retaliate.

I couldn't cut Michonne's hand off--and have Rick attack Gov, and then get raped, simply because a side character getting a hand cut off ISN'T a big deal. It had to be RICK. So then the options for a character attacking are Michonne and Glenn--it seemed more in-character to me for Michonne to attack instead of Glenn. I wanted to kind of have Glenn freaking out--this is the first time he's really been around some shit like this. Sure, he crept around zombies to gather supplies but he'd never seen someone whack off someone else's hand--that would STILL be traumatic.

I'm just saying, there's a logical reason for everything... and it's NOT racial in motivation.

Mr. Kirkman, I met you and took a photo with you at the 2006 San Diego Comic Con and you seem like a really cool guy. I don't want to believe that you're a racist, but I really don't think that you understand the gravity of the images you have portrayed, especially to your African American fans, particularly your female ones. You're one of my favorite writers in the business. I love Invincible and it was that love that made me want to read The Walking Dead in the first place, but I don't know if I can read it anymore after this. It's a damn shame because like I said, I am a fan. At least I think I still am.

Militantly yours,
Sundjata Abubakari

What would you prefer? Do you REALLY want every African-American character to be SAFE because I don't want to look like a racist? Do you want to read a book like that? A book

where characters you relate to have no danger--no suspense because you know I can't hurt them for fear of a backlash?

That's not the kind of book I want to write.

NOBODY is safe in this book. NOBODY. If I kill a Jewish person am I going to hear from Jewish people? Rodriguez is the first Hispanic character in the book. Does he have to be safe so that race remains represented? I CAN'T THINK like that or the stories will suffer.

Please cut me some slack here.

Hi Robert,

I have a few thoughts about WD.

In WD #29, why haven't the zombie heads in the box chewed up Rick's hand, which was in there with them?

Maybe they were--we didn't show inside the box. Or maybe they were stacked with their mouths AWAY from the head.

A nasty thought: if Lori's baby died in utero, would it turn zombie and chew her up?

It's possible.

What is the status of wildlife and animals in general? Are they all being chewed up like the deer we saw early on, or are some of them managing to coexist, or even *benefit* from the presence of zombies in their ecosystems (ie: ravens, rats)?

I'm sure it's a little bit of everything. I don't assume much of the wildlife is affected now that there are essentially REALLY SLOW humans without guns running around out there. I would think most wildlife would be better off in this situation.

I really hope the narrative trajectory might turn to the comparison of good and bad leadership (ala "Watership Down" and "Platoon") as I do think Rick has the potential to be a truly great, really heroic and visionary leader, and this travails could well make him an even better one! The loss of this right hand *is* seriously disabling (I had a busted hand a few years ago and that made life difficult enough), but maybe it will help him to use his heart and his intellect to make consistently better decisions.

Keep it coming!

Best wishes,
Ian C. Thomas

Yeah, Rick is definitely going to have some hard times ahead of him.

Ya Know..
10 years ago, when I was 16 I stopped buying comics. Completely Cold Turkey. Before that I was spending \$150-200 a month on comics. So I quit. Moved on to other things and whatnot.

Worst mistake of your life... probably.

Then one day I see The Walking Dead. I Love Zombies. Always Have. My favorite movie ever is the original Night of the Living Dead. I used to love comics. So I took a chance and bought it.

I Loved it! Bought every single issue so far (Currently #30). You gave me back the happy feelings I used to have when I was younger and comics were fun to read. Not the endless scavenger hunt to find every variant cover or special edition that ended up ruining comics for me. Not the buying every comic included in the newest mega-crossover gimmick to snag collectors. Not the buying every comic that I will never read because it has a cover drawn by one of my favorite artists.

No. You gave me back the art of READING a comic. Enjoying it from beginning to end and waiting so patiently yet eagerly for the next issue regardless of when it gets released.

Each time I see a new issue I tense up. I Gasp! I'm excited and can't wait to get home and read it. Even if it only lasts me 15 minutes, the wait is worth it.

Yes, your team is THAT good.

I just wanted to tell you that.

I only need to say thank you once. Thank You!

-Derek Burns

You know--if you want it to last LONGER than 15 minutes... you could read the letters columns. But you'll probably never read THIS... so there's really nothing I can do for you.

Mr. Kirkman,

Good evening. So, I see a lot of letters from "Zombie fans" who love your book, which is the obvious result of reading a story on a topic you like, but not many from people like me who really never got into the whole "Zombie" thing. Don't get me wrong, it's not the "idea" I don't like but I think more the comedy that's usually associated. I was relieved to read that you will be keeping this title "dead serious."

I've gotten plenty of letters that start with "I don't like zombies--but I read this book" SO THERE!

Ya so, I never was into the Zombie thing really, and when the owner of my comic shop of choice (Mike from Main Street Comics in Jersey) told me I had to read it I was sure it was going to be something I read and then passed on. Wow, was I wrong. This is now at the top of my read list and I have Mike and you to thank for it! Well more you, but Mike played a role at least. :) What has worked for me is that this book has stayed away from the "hilarity" of the zombie animals and the aptly dressed cheerleader and athlete zombies. Not that I don't find them funny, but I am much more likely to be in for the long haul on a book that makes me think and analyze rather than giggle and move on. So thank you much for such a great book and for allowing me to finally appreciate a good "zombie tale."

I prefer serious zombie stories myself.

Also, because you print the majority of letters that contain criticism, a new reader might get the idea that this book isn't living up to its hype. With rave reviews, shout-outs on G4's Attack of the Show, and a generally positive word of mouth, one might think you've slipped. In my opinion, that couldn't be further from the truth. The book is AWESOME! Not just a good read, but one of the best I have read in my 15 years of comic book reading. The story has moved along just perfect so please ignore the "not enough zombie" stuff. A good story is one that not only entertains but captivates.

Yeah, I've had people ask if the book is still doing well because I print all the negative mail. I mean, for every negative letter I print there's like five that just say "hey--love the book." I can't print THOSE in a letters column. How do I respond to the same thing 20 times? The negative mail is much more fun to respond to and it's more fun to read.

I love the cliffhanger endings and detailed story lines. This book, like very few others, (Girls by the Luna Brothers, Y the Last Man by BKV are good examples) tells a story that we become captivated with the more we learn about it. This genre has been done time and time again and yet we are still surprised when you reveal your latest plot twist, zombie related or not. That's hard to do with today's "over saturation of information," so kudos are due indeed.

And what's a letter without numbered questions I ask?

1. Why is it that the interior art is black and white? Its great and all, just curious. Is the cost to color that much of a factor?

Actually, I think because of the cover stock we use and paper quality it costs MORE per issue to print than Invincible. I could make this book color and change the paper quality and SAVE money.

2. When do we get to find out how the whole Zombie thing started? (Not rushing you just needed a number 2)

Your loyal reader,
~Dan Murray

NEVER. Sorry.

Dear Mr.Kirkman (Sorry Gangsta Dick Cheney won the title of "Mr. Daddy" for this month)

I'd like to start by saying you and the whole team (Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton) are doing an AWESOME job! And the suspense in Issue 30, first making us wonder if the figure we saw running to the prison was actually Glenn was bad enough but saving the governor's response to Rick in the end of issue 29 till the last page, pure evil! And now for some questions!

1) Why hasn't natural Decomposition of the zombies set in? There is a Beautiful back cover on issue 28 wher a zombie girl appears to have maggots on one of her shoulders (My favorite back cover so far actually) and it got me thinking, why haven't we seen hordes of carrion feeders preying on the undead? Vultures, Maggots, Rats, and Ants, those kind of things?

We've seen a little of that. They're there.

2) Since finding the prison it doesn't seem like the main characters have had much of an interest in finding other people, which I thought would be one of their top priorities. Doesn't it make sense that by now they would have at least tried to secure a CB radio?

They've been busy.

3) When can we expect the return of Rick's zombie hand? Im hoping that by issue 50 it

makes its comeback leading a horde of severed limbs.

NO.

Well I think that's enough questions for one letter. And thanks again for an awesome read every month!

Sincerely,
Jeff Wiebe

Thanks--we'll keep trying to not suck.

Mr. Kirkman,

(insert first time writing to a letters page remark)

The Walking Dead is probably the best comic book in the universe and I would just like to say thanks alot for all your hard work. A few questions...

1-With all that has taken place in the world of TWD why hasn't there been any talk of God? I understand that that's not what the book is about but still if I were Rick I couldn't help but wonder. Yet, in all fairness I guess they are to busy trying to survive to worry about the afterlife.

I'll try to mention it a few more times as the book goes on. It's been mentioned before--just not very much.

2-I don't mean this in a racist sort of way, but do you think it's possible that zombies prefer certain ethnicities or races because they taste better? I mean I'm not a cannibal or anything (although when I was younger I did go through a phase in which I ate my scabs)...

GOOD LORD. WHAT?

I think I've gone too far so I'll end things here by saying, keep up the good work.

(insert please print my letter remark)
Vin Gilante

You're a nut, Vin.

Now, immediately following this page you will find a PREVIEW for RED WARRIOR, a new graphic novel from Beckett and Image Comics. It's written by Jeff Amano and drawn by Andy MacDonald (of NYC MECH fame). While I haven't yet had the chance to read the book I will say that Jeff and Beckett have been putting out some fine, high quality books from Image over the last year or so and I'm sure this one is no different.

So check it out and if you like what you see--hunt the book down. It's actually ALREADY in stores, so it's really not much of a preview.

Enjoy!

ITEM! If you like this book and you've read a superhero comic before you should be reading INVINCIBLE. I write the book and it's drawn and colored by Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree. It's a swell book.

ITEM! Clayburn Moore, sculptor of the INVINCIBLE statue (in stores now) just sent me new photos of the Rick Grimes sculpture. It's looking DAMN AMAZING and I think you guys will ALL be happy with this one. I'll share photos here as soon as I can. It's GREAT! Should be available around summer time unless I'm mistaken.

ITEM! THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN just launched and the reviews are good. People seem to be liking this book and I certainly like it. Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree are all killing in the penciling, inking and coloring departments. Issue 2 should be in stores by the time this issue ships so be on the lookout!

ITEM! My ULTIMATE X-MEN run is just heating up. We're smack dab in the middle of the senses shattering CABLE four-part arc and I'm telling you--this ones going to be huge. Miss it at your own risk!

ITEM! Buy BATTLE POPE--come on--you know you want it. Issue 11 just shipped... it's a Christmas story. You like Christmas don't you? You more than likely like JESUS too right? This book is for YOU! (yeah, you!)

ITEM! I think I'm done but I really like typing "ITEM!"

ITEM! Yeah... I'm done.

See you back here next month! (or sooner--seriously)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, this issue was a bit intense, right? Sorry if you weren't expecting that. To be honest, I really wasn't expecting it either. It all seemed right to me as far as how the story was going. I mean, let's be honest--the Governor deserved it right?

Sure.

Let's answer a bit of mail, shall we?

Kirkman,
Just an idea. So many fans have asked how much time passes in between plot threads. And the baby is a great mechanism to show that. How about an issue with a ticking clock to show exactly how slow time passes?

Well, the thing about keeping it vague is that I don't have to be completely precise when it comes to the passage of time. It's just not in my best interest to lay it all out so readers can catch me make a mistake. I know roughly how much time is passing, and when, but making that public would just lead to confusion.

Walking Dead is by far the best character driven comic out there. Please follow up on the idea of how society would develop when it is isolated. Bigomy. Entertainment. Government. Religion hasn't been brought up much though. Thanx.

Todd C. Herbst

You'll see plenty about religion before long. I've got to get through my gratuitous violence stage first.

Dead Crew,

Lots of fucking cool stuff happens in this issue (#31):

1) Eugene stabs Harold in the neck, no hesitation. Sweet!
2) Michonne beheads Eugene right after she kicks his twig & berries back whence they came from. Adlard delivers a sweet panel of Eugene's head-loss.

a) Michonne reunited with her sword; she gets her motherfuckin' groove on, boy! Yes!

3) The Governor shows his true colors by having two guys take Michonne down. He's so afraid of her, she has to be chained up for him to be in the same room. The Governor is a pussy. I can't wait for Michonne to chop his head clean off. Or better yet, she chops his twig & berries off; that would constitute karmic justice.

She took care of the twig for sure--but I think the berries are still intact, for the most part.

A plea to the legion of TWD fans: Stop telling Robert what to do in upcoming stories. Obviously, he's created an incredible, dramatic world of stories without your input; he knows what he is doing.

I don't listen to anyone anyway, so it's really not a big deal.

Until Rick gets a chainsaw attached to his right hand, Make Mine, uh, (Kirk)man. Robert, you need to change your last name to begin with an 'M' to make the alliteration work. Get to it.

An irredeemable Walking Dead fan,
Sophea Uk

I'll get to work on that last name.

Yo, Zombie Dude!

Ok, just for the record I have TWD hard cover signed and numbered 18...SWEET!

Yes-I read it all the way through in one shot, yes-I loved the 3 page promo, yes-I wish a zombie would bite me so I could eat brains, yes-I have questions!

1.If they made a zombie James Bond movie would they make him only eat hot chicks?

I think that's in the by-laws.

2.Do you listen to white zombie when you write or go driving or ever? The first album was best! Lots of zombie movie sampling!

For whatever reason I never really listened to White Zombie. I had friends that did--and I always liked it--but I never bought a CD.

3.I totally agree that if this is ever going into film production that it should be a hardcore hbo/like tv series and it could be like you said, never ending...mmm brains!

This is not a question.

4.what kind of monkey brains are safe to eat? or like a delacacy in some countries?

Only the smart monkeys have brains that are safe to eat.

Sorry I got zombies on my brain...

Rob Steal

We all do. It's okay.

Hello Mr. Kirkman--

We in Canada love the Walking Dead and we especially love arena death matches. Issue thirty-one was sweet. # @*% another cliff hanger? Cripes it makes me feel like a junkie as soon as I finish reading an issue I'm already jonesn' for another fix.

That's the idea!

I tried Day of the dead, Omega man, 28 Days later, nothing fills/stops the cravings. The recolored Battle Pope helps, though.

That makes next to no sense... but if it gets you reading, all the better!

I work at a comic store and the trades are great to get the kids hooked they read one then come back for 2-4 the next like clock work then the weak willed ones usually succumb to the issues. Thanks for the awesome book!

From the frozen north
Riley Rossmo

Thanks for reading--and writing!

Dear Kirkman,

Kind of a down issue this time. I can't believe that the 'Guvnor' was so stupid as to trust Michonne! And where's the other guy? Where's Glenn? I know about the Irredeemable Ant-Man, but I think even you have the character all wrong! Ant-Man

should be more like Spider-Man, with the proportionate abilities of an ant! Right? Spiders are pretty damn small, but does Peter Parker shrink?! Course not. Ants are generally BLACK, too, not red. I'm still not sure who the new Ant-Man is gonna be though. Back to TWD. I think the best thing would be for the prison population and the Woodbury population to live in harmony! So, uh, have them build a tunnel or something, between Woodbury and the prison. This series always makes you feel some powerful emotions....

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

How boring would it be if the characters just went to Woodbury for Thanksgiving or something? That would be totally lame.

You need to talk to Stan Lee if you dislike the whole shrinking Ant-Man thing. Sorry.

Robert,

Just wanted to check in and let you know how good the current WD arc is. Can't wait to see where we're going on this ride. On a different note, I really enjoy the letter column, and I think its pretty cool that you print so many of them. I like hearing readers ideas, questions and suggestions as well as your responses. This is my second time writing to you (1st one was published, thank you very much) and I'm not sure if you have ever covered this or not. Have you considered another ongoing title set in the Walking Dead universe? I mean whole different set of people in another city altogether. I know you did that small follow up in the Image Christmas 05 special, I just thought that there might be some room in the backdrop you created for additional groups of people dealing with Zombies in other locations. Just a thought. Talk you soon. Keep up the good work. Tell Charlie to keep it up too.

Clyde in NJ

A second series with new characters isn't the worst idea in the world. There was a time early on where I had actually considered the idea. In the end I decided against it because I think expanding the book into a line of books would eventually weaken the popularity of this series and hurt sales and possibly sabotage this book. I want to write this book for a good long time. I'm not after the quick cash, I just want to tell my stories.

So yeah, only one book for the time being.

I have written in before and you published me, so fingers crossed I make the cut again... I wanted to email you to tell you about some zombie paraphernalia that I'm sure you already know about.

1. Dead Rising on XBOX 360 is amazing

I'll probably check that out one day.

2. Max Brooks came out with his next zombie book, World War Z - An Oral History of the Zombie War. Haven't read it yet but the Zombie Survival Guide is a piece of literature that will save a man's life.

It's on my to read list.

Well, that's it. Honestly, who makes a list with only two items. By the way I love how you are putting illustrations of zombies on the back covers of your comics now. I would totally do the chick on the back of Issue 31. She might be a biter though...

Eric Baca
Zombie Conservationist Extraordinaire

Did you just admit that you would have sex with a dead woman? I bet you're not glad I printed this letter NOW!

Robert,

Just read 31. Michonne rocks, don't kill her off for a while. I'm looking forward to learning more about her back story. Her conduct in the fight...getting to see her make the Governor's life hell before she gets her final revenge is nice. Can't wait for her to get that bastard.

Hopefully you liked this issue.

The Walking Dead is like crack. Everyone I recommend it to gets hooked on it. Letter Hacks is one of the best letter columns in comics right now, tied with The Goon and BPRD as my favorite. Invincible kicks ass, too, and as a catholic school dropout and former altar boy I can't help but love Battle Pope.

As an Ant-man fan, I was wondering if the new series is going to be an ongoing or a mini? Looking forward to it either way.

Oh, it's an ongoing series. Hopefully it'll go for a good long time.

A few zombie movie recommendations (since you asked and all):

Cemetery Man aka Dellamorte Dellamore (excellent surreal black comedy featuring Anna Falchi's boobs)
Versus (karate/yakuza/samurai/zombie flick from Japan)
Wild Zero (Japanese punk rock zombiefest starring the band Guitar Wolf)
Dead Alive aka Braindead (Peter Jackson's best movie and the goriest movie of all time)
Return of the Living Dead ("Send more Paramedics"...'nuff said)
Dawn of the Dead '79 (not obscure, but my favorite)

Thanks for hours of awesome zombie goodness and keep up the good work.

Brad Parker

All good recommendations, thanks.

It appears the stars have aligned and I must write, for in the last issue you asked for favourite obscure zombie movies and boy have I got an obscure one for ya! Plus you seemed to dig the chick letters so here's another for you. First the gratuitous "OMG I love you man". I do. You are a sick and deviant mind and your work, and the work of the rest of the Walking Dead team of course, is incredible. The black and white style is amazing and the perfect choice for such a graphic story. Letting the imagination fill in the colour delivers far more gore then you would ever really put to paper (or may be that's just me...). I love the fact that the storyline is really exploring how the most dangerous thing we can possibly face in any time of crisis is each other.

Guess I'll throw a Zombie question out there before I wrap this up (everybody's doin' it). I'll skip the "give me upcoming plot details" part of the question. I hope that's OK, but I kinda thought I'd let you tell the story. Here goes; Most plagues have symptoms other then your main one and also a certain percentage of people who seem to be immune. Why do you think we don't tend to see this in zombie plague stories?

Bad writing? On my part at least.

Here comes the obscurity, are you ready for it? My favourite obscure zombie flick is INTERCESSOR: ANOTHER ROCK AND ROLL NIGHTMARE. Why you might ask (and believe me if you had seen it you would ask)? Because I'm in it. I'm the Cop Zombie! I got to eat latex intestines and even had a couple of lines. It was a lot of fun to be part of something so very "B" and to be a creature that I love so much.

That's all she wrote,
Lisa Hudson

Man, I had to read this whole damn letter so you could promote some movie you're in. Jerk. Oh, well, any letter from a female reader is always worth printing.

Mr. K.,

That Whore!!!

That disease-ridden infection-spreading Whore!!!

I SEE that Mr. A.'s doing a little moon-lighting for a company that he once drew a series about dead space-guys in deep-doo. Are YOU not paying Mr. A. enough to keep him happy, Mr. K.?

Adlard get's far more fish heads for working on this book than he does for that other company. And I hit him with a stick WAY less when he starts to misbehave.

Before you know it, Mr. A. will be going over to the other big industries, like Dark Horse, Marvel, or even D.C. (Dead Company - hey I made a funny!) !!!

Adlard has been in this biz for almost 47 years and has done work at all these companies. He knows where the love is. Don't worry.

Look at the preview art of Rock Bottom! It looks like Mr. A. drew it while he was on crack, or lsd!

Is that a good thing?

If I didn't know it any better, it's some of his best art since THE X-FILES!!!! If this is true, then Mr. A.'s holding back on WD! You are NOT paying him enough, Mr. K.!!!

Eh, what can you do.

WD-31. Another dead-on terror-ific suspense-filled issue. Michone (everyone's favorite schizophrenic or multiple-disordered person) on the amok! Poor Guv'nor, he's so dead, he doesn't even know it yet. You almost feel sorry for the poor bastard.

Almost.

Poor Rick. No right hand. How is he’s gonna do you-know-what at night? Ask his wife?

Sorry.

I haven’t seen this mentioned in the letter pages of late, so I don’t know if you or anyone knows it or not. The movie that inspired you to make WD, “28 Days Later” has spawned a sequel - “28 Weeks Later” due out in 2007.

28 Days Later is not the movie that inspired me to make The Walking Dead. I’d been working on the book for a few months when I heard about that movie. That damn opening scene in the first issue was pure coincidence.

Wouldn’t it be cool to see two more sequels? “28 Months Later” and “28 Years Later” ? Might this inspire more WD spinoffs? Say geographically instead of timely? WD: Europe; WD: South America; WD: Africa or Asia or Australia? Might have to get different artists for each spinoff. Mr. A.’s too busy whoring himself. ;-)

Right, I need the sequel to a movie to inspire me to do spin-offs of my book. I never would have thought of that if someone hadn’t decided to do a sequel to 28 Days Later.

Sigh.

17 more issues until Oversize Omnibus Vol. 2. Work faster. Will WD X-mas special be reprinted in Vol. 2?

Yes, it will be.

44 more issues until final issue of WD # 75. I know you want to do 300 - 500 issues of WD, but does Mr. A.? Do 75 issues first then decide whether to continue or not. Nobody lives forever `less they’re dead.

What?

Got to go now. My dead dog’s eyeing me funny. Guess the slaughtered cow wasn’t fresh enough.

Thanks for another great issue of WD.

HAND, SOT, and TTYL,
Tom Fitzpatrick

You’re welcome.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Doing a fantastic job as always on the book. As far as other zombie movies go, here goes...
1-THE DEAD NEXT DOOR-Pretty ambitious for being shot on super 8.
2-ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST-How can you go wrong with Zombies AND Cannibals. Some of the lamest dialogue ever but gory.
3-NIGHTMARE CITY-Unintelligent zombies who can use automatic weapons,fun!
4-BLIND DEAD films-Great stuff. Zombie knights templar.
5-EROTIC NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD-Don’t even ask...D’Amato trying to merge horror with hardcore pornography
6-DELLAMORTE DELLAMORE-Fantastic! Soavi does a great job here of adapting the Dylan Dog italian comic book.
7-BURIAL GROUND-Horrible,but gory. Plus where else will you see an actor playing a mother’s kid son older than the actress playing the mother!
8-HELL OF THE LIVING DEAD-A bad rip off of Dawn,right down to the music.
9-All the Fulci Zombie movies,GATES OF HELL,THE BEYOND,HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY,ZOMBIE,and ZOMBIE 3. I’m sure there are others,but that’s all I can think of right now...

Jeff Baughman

Thanks for the list, Jeff!

Hey Robert,

Just dropping another line, letting you know how much I’m digging the new direction the story’s going in. It’s a nice departure from the Romero-esque prison scene. Not that the prison’s a bad setting (far from it), but the fortress mentality of these characters, while not unrealistic, reminds me too much of the sub-plots for a half dozen other zombie stories out there. To tell you the truth, it’s the little touches in this town that I’m really enjoying. The scene with the screaming mother was particularly telling: bitch and scream all you want, but the men with the guns are the ones in control. Depending on your political bent, you could draw all kinds of metaphors from that page alone.

I’m sure I’ll get angry letters from people doing just that.

Anyway, enough film school bull. A few comments, a few questions.

An issue or two back, one of your readers seemed to have a thunderous hard-on for the AK-47. This, of course, brings all kinds of uncomfortable images to mind (I wonder- does Charleton Heston have a pin-up calendar?) Regardless, the AK is a terrible weapon. Sure, you could beat a herd of cows to death with the thing, throw it in the mud,

drop it in saltwater, and set it on fire and it’ll keep firing...but does it fire accurately? Far from it. Unlike the M-16, the AK is a crudely machined bit of equipment, and when it fires the recoil causes the entire assembly to clatter like a loose set of keys, throwing your accuracy way off after the first shot. The rifle can also be fired on full auto, leading too many users to give in to temptation and uselessly “rock and roll.” I’m not at all into guns, but I’ve had the chance to fire an AK, and I know enough about the weapons’ history to know that the rifle would be a poor choice for the zombie survivalist. Martinez has the right idea, when he tells Rick he’s helping him escape. A single shot, scoped rifle would be the most logical choice.

I’m totally canceling that AK-47 I’ve had on layaway. Thanks for the advice.

I don’t know if you’ve addressed this before, but when exactly does this story take place? The only reason I ask is that if the plague began after the invasion of Iraq, it’d go a long way to explaining why you don’t see more military hardware or zombies in uniform.

I imagine issue 1 took place around October of 2003 and we’re roughly 7 or 8 months after that by now, creeping into summer of 2004.

When you get the chance, you should check out “Word War Z.” Great book, kind of a “Longest Day” version of a zombie plague.

It’s on my to-read list.

Sorry `bout the last letter, didn’t think you’d throw up. But you know, zombie feces and all....it kind of makes sense.

Oh, one last thing. Rick needs a hook. A big, shiny, fuck off chrome job that’d make Peter Pan soil himself. And an eye patch. I guess a parrot might be too much to hope for.

Looking forward to more carnage,
C.S.

P.S. Tell Charlie, Cliff and Rus they’re doing fine work.

Charlie, Cliff and Rus--I just wanted to say, you’re doing fine work!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I’m writing this mail in order to want you to know that you have lots of fans in Turkey :)

That’s cool to know. I’m a HUGE fan of turkey (note lack of capitalization).

In Turkey we do not have local comic book shops everywhere like you guys have so it’s really difficult to track down the new comics. That’s why I happened to know your awesome masterpiece late enough to miss few first issues (to be honest, I missed nearly 20 issues). But in Turkey we have proverbs saying that *It’s never too late to mend and A fault confessed is half redressed*. So I began to track the Walking Dead from 19th issue. From there on I add a copy of “Walking Dead” to my shopping cart every month. At this point I must thank the DCP team for helping me to cover the missed issues.

Wow--I’m sorry it’s such a chore to get books over there. Don’t sweat coming onto the book late. What matters most is that you’re here now.

From my childhood to my adulthood I have a keen interest in walking dead stuff. I have watched the Romero’ s quadrilogy more than a couple of times (do not know the number exactly). Like Master Romero, in the Walking Dead you have created the atmosphere so good that when reading there were sometimes that I have totally collapsed. More over the “human psychology in the shitty conditions” that you reflect make me to think once more about the survival ethics. What I am trying to say in short is you are genius :) Thank you so much! Not only you but all the team!

That’s all from Turkey now.

Lot’s of respects,

Can Kartoglu

P.S: I have enjoyed reading “Marvel Zombies”, that was F-U-N!

Glad you liked it.

Dearest Dr. Kirkman,

I’ve awarded you with a doctorate in undead studies, uh, yeah, i can do that. I’d knight you if I could...thought that i’d first write this letter the same as everyone else, and of course that includes a list, but mines different, i guess; 1. First-time writer! wow! i never thought i’d write to a comic book, yet here i am! 2. props to my LCS, Cheryl’s Comics and Toys in Charleston, WV. 3. I’ve been reading since X issue and now i’ve got `em all, it’s like crack! 4 .The Walking Dead is the best book out there and everything you touch turns to gold and all the artwork is amazing in it’s harsh starkness....then the complaints come, scheduling,

when's she having the damn baby?, people look too much alike, and the like, you've read it at LEAST as many times as i have.

I've always read the letters and have been entertained, yr answers seem to give an insight into yr genial personality, and it is nice after all the horror show of the last pages, and it gave me another reason to keep reading when i otherwise would've already had it bagged and boarded. I'd always considered writing letter hacks and writing the shortest letter ever. "no more letters, just more story", i would've never done it, because you see, I've never written to a comic book, i'm one of those people that you've turned into comic readers...but, uh....the reason i'm writing is i had a problem: #30. after waiting forever for glenn to return to the prison, as the ad with the cover in #29 shows, i know i know, no one ever said it was glenn...but c'mon, a wounded little asian kid, vs. fighting linebacker...that ain't tyrese. i like being fooled though so that's cool. My problem? Where's my Rathburn back cover? Kill whoever you want (i like Glenn though), but the backcovers are just the greatest...especially #25. And I know you (and Image) have an opportunity to showcase new and upcoming comics, and i see the connection...but whatabout the million letters that I love to complain about?

Drive fast and take chances,

Jimmy Hunt

The back covers took a month off to make room for the Criminal preview. I thought it was worth it... but I have a deep festering hatred for all things Cliff Rathburn. That man is far more evil than any of you will ever know.

Dear Kirk-THE-Man,

I just read your interview with CBR News where you mention zombie stories are meant to show the changes that would happen to society over time. I couldn't agree more, and I love that you realize the story potential that you are doing with TWD.

With the unnecessary praise done, let's get down to business. In TWD #29, the Governor gives his daughter a hand to eat, presumably Rick's. In the first panel it's clearly a left hand, but it was Rick's right hand that was cut off. In the next panel, it magically becomes a right hand. Even though it's implied that the hand is Rick's, I suppose you could say the first hand was from a person in the helicopter crash, given to the daughter first off panel, and the second hand shown is Rick's. I doubt I'm the first to notice this, but what do you say, do I get a no-prize? Or how about a decayed-prize, expired-prize, etc.

Until I see a Battle Pope, Capes, Invincible, Science Dog, TWD crossover (actually I'd love to see that),
-efcufochr

Your no prize is in the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I always figured US creators and other related lifeforms would be glad and surprised to hear their work is read and appreciated so far away from home... and I all I ever get from you is a "so you're European, big deal". Bendis actually corrected my list of his Spanish-published work once, when I wrote to congratulate him about it. He CORRECTED it.

Can a bald American be any more arrogant than that? I guess he doesn't realize I could kill him and still get a year of pre-scripted Bendis books, which means he's not completely safe from my wrath.

So no list for you, Mr. Kirkman.

So you're European? Big deal!

I will, however, tell you a little story about my friends and co-workers. I've been following your work on its original American format since TWD's first issue. When it started getting published in Spain (5 issues at a time, almost one book every six months -- can't you fix that somehow?) and I saw the first issue while hanging out in a local comic store with other people I suffered something that vaguely resembled an asthma attack, which surprisingly got several of my friends to buy the book. Well, that and the gorgeous black and white art.

Flash forward a year or two (your book really comes out too slowly here, Mr. Kirkman), when a friend of mine went to London with his girlfriend. There, he saw an unpublished book of TWD and carelessly took a peek inside. This had two effects:

1) My friend saw Rick with his hand cut off. A sizable force of security guards and worried girlfriends had to prevent him from gouging his eyeballs out with a Wolverine action figure.

It's easier with a Spider-Man figure.

2) I finally had somebody to talk to about the last story arc of the book. I was dying here. I knew all these important things about rape and mutilation while everybody else was still talking about how cool Rick's speech at the end of the last book was. I feel much better now, thanks.

So there you go. Greetings from Spain. By the way, this eyeless friend

of mine also loved Marvel Zombies. I didn't read it when he did. Now that I've had to survive months of him randomly bringing it up in the middle of unrelated conversations I think I never will. Nothing personal, of course.

Keep it up. Faster.
Néstor Forján

We're trying to do the books faster here in the states. As far as foreign reprints go, I don't have much control over that stuff. It's pretty much up to the foreign publishers when the books ship.

Mr Kirkman,

Big fan of Walking Dead. A friend gave me the tpb of the first 6 issues and I've been hooked since. Big Romero fan (once slept in a car in a rest stop in Kenosha Wisconsin to meet him) and big zombie fan. Knew I liked your stuff after reading the book and Marvel Zombies. But when I read in the letter column that you hated bendis, I knew you are special. :) What do you think of Civil War?

I don't hate Bendis, in fact, I love him. I just like to give him shit in the letters columns of my books because I know that bald troll will more than likely never read them.

Just to jump off on a tangent, I think Brian had a pretty big hand in getting me work at Marvel which was a big kick start to my career at a time with The Walking Dead and Invincible were just starting to take off. Brian is a great guy and he's helped me out a lot over the years.

That doesn't change that fact that he's so silly looking.

While reading issue #30, I was thinking about something. When the group was on the tower taking out zombies it made me think of a thought I had one time in regards to the original Dawn of the Dead. Just as a mental exercise I was trying to "correct" any mistakes the group made. One of the ideas I had was to go out and kill some of the surrounding zombies just to thin the crowd and to give a warning to anyone coming by. Some zombie heads on lances might discourage others wanting to take away the mall. I was going to email you this idea, but in the letter column you mention the idea that none of the group had ever seen a zombie movie. Guess it just goes to show great minds think alike. :)

Enjoying the series, can't wait to see what happens when Rick and Michonne get out of town and back to the prison. If I may make one suggestion, I really liked the "cast so far" head shots & short descriptions you had at the end of the book. I realize it got very very long and unwieldy, but you don't have to include everyone. As much as I liked little Duane Jones (since I was a late comer, did anyone get that in joke/homage?), you don't need to include everyone. Maybe just the crew and "special guest stars" (as they used to say on TV shows). Interesting use of the prison as a setting, never would have thought of it but it makes sense.

The character list will be back shortly. If not next issue... then soon. I just need to take the time to update it.

Well, in closing, keep up the good work and keep the zombies up also. One last question, since you have an "ensemble" cast, do you like any of the ensemble dramas on television like Lost or Battlestar Galactica?

Best,
Butch Rosenbalm

I'm a huge fan of LOST. I know I'm going to LOVE Battlestar Galactica when I finally get around to buying the DVDs but I haven't had a chance to pick them up yet.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Awesome job. You are an inspiration. I'm a writer myself but not for comics. Anyways, one thing that really bugs me is, are you planning on including Morgan and Duane Jones in any future issues? Like I always imagined Rick and his group meeting up with the Jones' and them having their own group. Maybe for a battle against a huge zombie army? I don't know, I'm just talking out of my ass. But seriously, I would love to see the Jones' come back and I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

Awesomely sincere,
Will C.

I want them back in the book more than anyone, trust me. I always intended to bring them back. It's just taking me a while to figure out a believable way to get them back into the book. It'll happen, though.

Damn you, Kirkman.

I've been an avid comic book fan my entire life. Most of my childhood was spent with my nose in an Avengers book, or something involving the X-Men. As I grew into my teens and beyond, I kept up with my

favorite mags. Eventually it got to the point where I just waited for the trade paperbacks to come out, so I could get great lumps of the story all at once.

That’s how it’s been for me- wait till the trade comes out. I remember my brother exclaiming how somebody named Onslaught was going to kill everyone but the X-Men. I was tempted to pick up individual issues, but I held off. When Grant Morrison came to write the X-Men I was excited, but did I pick up individual issues? Nope. I waited, and lo and behold, the trades came out on a regular basis and I kept up with the story. When Infinite Crisis, and Identity Crisis before it, blasted onto the shelves I remained in control and isolated myself from my favorite websites, lest I discover something that would ruin the story when I read it in its entirety. Currently, even as intrigued as I am about Marvel’s current Civil War storyline, I’m waiting. I’d rather read it in a collected volume.

So I say again, damn you, Kirkman.

My brother let me know about The Walking Dead a couple of years back. He recommended it highly. As he’s as much a connoisseur of zombie fiction as I am (my brother and I were both traumatized by a young viewing of “Dawn of the Dead”, and to this day do not go into malls without scoping out defensive positions first), I knew I had to check this book out. Luckily the first trade had already been published, so I picked it up-and was absolutely enthralled. Clearly this was a book written for zombie fans by a zombie fan. It had everything I wanted- gruesome hordes of the undead, great artwork and characters that were so well-written I caught myself actually feeling wretched when one or the other got bitten. I still mist up when I re-read the first trade and see Jim’s long, slow decline into zombiehood. That’s good stuff, man.

And yet I still held out, stubborn cuss that I am, from buying the individual issues. I eagerly snatched up the trades when they came out, and at least the first three ended story arcs so I didn’t have to wait to see how a cliffhanger resolved itself.

Everything was going so well until you threw that damned helicopter into the mix. My brother bought me the latest trade for my birthday, and I immediately excluded myself from the rest of my family to tear through it. A helicopter? Cool. It stands to reason that others are out there with aircraft. Rick’s group couldn’t be the only ones left. Going out to check the crash with riot gear? Makes perfect sense- I’ve been reading about the group’s adventures in the prison for a year now, so why didn’t it ever occur to me that they should have riot gear laying around someplace?

Then they got to Woodbury. And they met the Governor. And Rick’s hand was chopped off, and Michonne was raped and brutalized. And I realized the bloody trade paperback had less than 20 pages left. And then I realized something else: there was no way I would be able to leave these characters in limbo until the next trade came out.

So I say one last time: damn you, Kirkman.

I just bought issue #31, and half-read the thing in the car on the way home while I was driving because I couldn’t wait to see what happens next. Marvel was unable to suck me back in to buying issues month by month. DC couldn’t do it either. But your story about Rick and his people trying to survive a zombie apocalypse did it. Now I’m going to be one of those people awaiting your book each and every month, gathering in front of the local comic book shop the day it’s realized, ready to devour your story as soon as I can sink my teeth into it... hey, that sounds kind of familiar, huh?

You write one mean story, Mr. Kirkman, and you’ve hooked me. I can’t wait to see what happens next.

Thanks for that.
Rob Casaletta

Cool. The more people I can pull from the TPBs to get on the singles the better. You don’t want to miss out on these wildly entertaining letters columns, right?

The Walking Dead changed my life!

Okay, maybe that was a little dramatic but I can say that I have no idea how I didn’t read this book before now. I loved Marvel Zombies and I am really digging your work on Ultimate X-Men (the Shi’ar as a Scientology-like religion is brilliant) but until last week I had never picked up a copy of Walking Dead or Invincible. A friend of mine had been telling me that I really should be reading your other books. So I got my hands on collections of Walking Dead and Invincible and I am loving them so freaking much. I read through Walking Dead in a few days - I just could not put it down - and now I am on the second trade of Invincible and I think I have a new favorite super-hero book.

Thanks for coming around--but you only read my Marvel stuff for a while? FOR SHAME!

But back to my homeboy Rick and the rest of the walking dead - I am so in love with this book and these characters (even though you keep killing them). This has to be the most ingenious use of zombies in recent memory (Shaun of the Dead coming in second). Your focus on the emotional impact on the survivors gives the book such depth and soul. I can’t say enough about it. And so far Invincible is the best super-hero book I have read in a long time. Your writing has really

inspired me to get off my butt and pick up a pen. A friend of mine and I have an idea for a story for some time and reading your work has really inspired me to move forward with this.

I guess my only questions for now are:
1. Do you have a planned ending for Walking Dead? How long to you plan the series to run?

I would like the series to go on as long as humanly possible. I’d be happy to do 300 issues. No planned ending in mind. I’ll wrap it up when it’s time... until then, I’ll play it by ear.

2. Any chance Rick is going to pull an Ash and fix a chainsaw to his newly made stub? Perhaps a boomstick?

No chance.

3. Would you suggest self-publishing or trying to get published as a new writer?

-- Chris Gray

Yes, but it’s very difficult. You need to be sure that it’s something you want to do.

My greatest praises to you, Lord Kirkman,

TWD is by far the greatest comic book i have ever read. Infact, it was the first one i started reading religiously, and now is the only one i can afford on my meager paycheck. I got a girlfriend, so now I have to cut back on my comic book budget, but TWD will always be bought, every month. I’ve been pimping TWD to all my freinds. Enough praises for you. Now for Questions.

1) What about those two dudes back in Rick’s Home town, are they alive, will we even know? Will they show back up!

See previous letter.

2) Tyreese said he wouldn’t give up looking for Rick till he “See his body,” too bad that dead body would try to eat him... Just thought that was funny.

Good point.

3) What’s up with the Governors family! Why are they Zombies!? The doctor said something about it, but it just raised more questions than it answered!

All will be revealed in time.

4) Rick only has one hand, any chance he’ll pull an Ash Williams and replace it with a chainsaw? I know your all thinking this, just no one had the balls to ask.

No chance.

5) Still about Rick’s hand, the hand that was severed, that was the hand he broke to hell on the guys face, right? That means he still has one good hand... right?! I looked though the whole book, making sure, over and over, but i’m still not content.

Yes, his bad hand was the one that was severed.

6) How old is Carl now? He’s acting more older than i thought he was, taking care of his mom and all... Is it just forced maturity, in an apocalyptic world, or is he like 13 now?

Only 7 months or so have passed since the first issue. Carl is just growing up due to the situation he’s in.

Well, that’s all i have time for. Goodbye Kirkman, and Kudos to Marvel Zombies.

-TheWordSayer

Thanks!

I just wanted to thank you for the free retailer hardcover. I for one am a big fan of the walking dead and sell the fuck out of it to anybody that listens to my recommendations. even though I own the trades I will be keeping the hardcover for myself (unless this thing goes for big money on eBay, like new car money!) Thank you again keep up the good work and I will keep selling it.in other words no more 4 month gaps that kind of stuff hurts us all.

Mike Shianabargar
Ast.Manger of
Amazing Fantasy
Tinley Park IL

Cut me some slack, Mike... there has NEVER been a four month gap. I may be wrong but as I recall there was never more than a two month gap between any issue. I hope you enjoy the hardcover, though. I appreciate all that you and other retailers have done to support this book.

Mr. Kirkman:

I'm a very big fan of the Walking Dead series. I really do enjoy what you are doing with it. I read the first three trades & then I decided to go monthly. I simply did that because I just couldn't wait for the next trade six months down the line. But, I'm afraid to say that Walking Dead #31 will be my last monthly issue. It's not that I don't like the series. I really do. But, the duration of the delays between the monthly issues is getting out of hand. I find it hard to sit down and enjoy the story. Getting 22 pages once every 6 to sometimes 8 weeks just kills the enjoyment of the story. I will though continue to purchase the trades. It was the trades that made me a fan. It was the monthly issues that cooled my interest. I will miss those great letter pages. But, what can I do?

Please do keep up the great work. After all, I will be following the trade paperback editions.

AA

The delays have not been the most ideal of situations, true, but hopefully in the coming months that will really, and truly be behind us. I got hit with a number of things this year that slowed me down, one of which was the birth of my first child. The Marvel books continued to ship on time because I only have to turn in a script for them. I do far more behind the scenes stuff on my Image books and that's where the delays came in. I'm getting a better handle on it now. The schedule should be rock-solid throughout 2007... we'll see.

Greetings from the Great White North,

In my younger days I was what you might call a comiholic. My parents took me out every Saturday to the local variety store to by my weekly fix of Spiderman, Batman, Swamp Thing, Creepy, Superman, and so on.

Good parents.

But time marches on and I gave up my collection and moved on to novels and movies, leaving behind the illustrated worlds of my youth.

I married and had kids, and unlike me they never had the opportunity to read the comics that brought me so much joy.

Then one day on Ebay I noticed a Trade Paperback that caught my eye. It was the first collection of The Walking Dead, and from that time I've been hooked. I bought the next collection and then one title became two, two became three and... well you can guess the rest. I now subscribe to tons of titles and have made my online subscription service very happy. Even my kids are hooked now, and I have to defend my stash against the little stinkers, otherwise I'm searching for missing issues.

But by far my favorite comic is still The Walking Dead.

I find it as stimulating as any novel I've read, and as addicting as any TV show or movie series I've come across. Without the characters and story lines you've developed, I and my family would never have experienced what I feel is the rebirth of the comic industry.

Bravo people!!!

It's always nice to hear about this book getting people back into comics. That's probably the most rewarding kind of praise this book could get. Comics are a fantastic form of entertainment (my favorite) and it pains me that so many people have lost their way and given it up.

And I just finished reading issue #31.

WTF do you mean... a new chapter?!

Don't you dare kill off Rick!!
I just about crapped myself when you cut off his hand !!

Always a fan,
Frank Sperberg.

Wait a minute--DON'T kill Rick? You don't want me to kill him? Crap.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

In the hardcover of TWD you mention that "Night of the Living Dead" somehow fell into the public domain. I just saw a TV interview with the director, George Romero, and he answered that question. He was originally going to call the movie "Night of the Flesh Eaters." When he changed the title, the distributor changed the original title to NOTLD, but forgot to put the copyright notice on the film prints. At that time copyright law required it. Thus, lacking the notice, Romero eventually lost the copyright. The more you know.

Quick question so this isn't just a history lesson:

1. Will you ever deliberately release something of TWD into the public domain?

-Anthony Benitez

Why would I release any part of The Walking Dead into public domain? It'll be there in a hundred years or so anyway... but seriously, the zombies are in public domain (and plenty of people are making money on those) so there's really nothing else to give. Odd question. Thanks for the info on NOTLD though, I didn't know about all that.

I should probably take the time to update this shilling section below... but it's late and I'm tired. I'll do it next month!

ITEM! If you like this book and you've read a superhero comic before you should be reading INVINCIBLE. I write the book and it's drawn and colored by Ryan Ottley and Bill Crabtree. It's a swell book.

ITEM! Clayburn Moore, sculptor of the INVINCIBLE statue (in stores now) just sent me new photos of the Rick Grimes sculpture. It's looking DAMN AMAZING and I think you guys will ALL be happy with this one. I'll share photos here as soon as I can. It's GREAT! Should be available around summer time unless I'm mistaken.

ITEM! THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN just launched and the reviews are good. People seem to be liking this book and I certainly like it. Phil Hester, Ande Parks and Bill Crabtree are all killing in the penciling, inking and coloring departments. Issue 2 should be in stores by the time this issue ships so be on the lookout!

ITEM! My ULTIMATE X-MEN run is just heating up. We're smack dab in the middle of the senses shattering CABLE four-part arc and I'm telling you--this ones going to be huge. Miss it at your own risk!

ITEM! Buy BATTLE POPE--come on--you know you want it. Issue 11 just shipped... it's a Christmas story. You like Christmas don't you? You more than likely like JESUS too right? This book is for YOU! (yeah, you!)

ITEM! I think I'm done but I really like typing "ITEM!"

ITEM! Yeah... I'm done.

See you back here next month!

-Robert Kirkman



LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Don't worry, we're hard at work on issue 35... so you shouldn't have to wait more than a few weeks before you find out what's going on.

Heh.

Now, As I type this issue 32, 33 and now 34 have shipped monthly or better (unless the holidays hold this issue up at all). I just wanted to point it out because while everyone likes to point out and complain about lateness... even when we're BARELY late, very few people send in letters that say "hey--you're on time, great!"

I'm not patting ourselves on the back just yet. We'll see how many issues we've put out by the end of 2007 before any medals are issued, but I think we're getting a handle on things and the worst is definitely behind us.

We did only put out nine issues in 2006... which sucks. Sorry about that.

We're shooting for 12 or MORE in 2007. You'll see.

NOW, while this issue is going to ship AFTER Christmas (and the other holidays), it's still well before the holiday season here so I'm going to be giving you all a little gift.

For YOU we're running last year's The Walking Dead story from the Image Holiday Special 2005. It was printed in the BOOK ONE hardcover that's out, but the majority of you single issue buyers may have missed the

Holiday Special and probably didn't buy that hardcover... so I'm running it here so you don't miss out.

It's a Morgan and Duane story--for those of you who remember issue 1 and wonder what they've been up to. ENJOY!

And my Christmas present for ME this year is a shorter letters column... so I can spend more time working on OTHER stuff... and maybe even spending some time with my family. I hope I get an iPod this year!

Okay... I might as well answer a FEW letters. Let's see what we got here.

HOLY CRAP!!! This book is so good...the escape was great, and I felt so bad for the doctor, but I guess someone had to bite it...and Michonne heading for revenge, that was sweet...and I really wanted to see that town just get torn apart, with someone letting zombies loose inside, but that's not Rick's style, so it makes sense that that wouldn't happen...but that doesn't mean Michonne won't... anyway, questions

1. What's going on back at the prison?

As you can see at the end of this very issue... nothing good.

2. What's gonna happen to this town? And will we see it?

We haven't seen the last of Woodbury by a long shot... don't worry. Woodbury and all the people still there will play a rather large role in the next year or two of stories in this book. I think you'll all like where this is going.

Anyway, that's about all I can think of....only 264 more issues to outrun Cerebus...and I'm hoping to be here until the end...

Mr Lumpstastic

I'm hoping to be here until the end! We'll see how far we go. I'd love to be doing this book a decade from now.

Dear Ye Ol' Grizzly One,

Thanks for not making Glenn a total pussy. I appreciate it.

Yeah, Glenn's been a LITTLE wimpy in the last few issues but he's going to be getting some redemption later on. Glenn is one of my favorite characters in the book.

It seems like Walking Dead is losing a bit of its unpredictability. When I first read it, it seemed that anyone could go at anytime (and they did). Lately however, it seems like there are a few "sacred cows" i.e. Rick, Lori, Tyreese, and to a lesser extent Hershel. It would be nice to see a few more shocker deaths to make the reader less comfortable.

Man you guys are hard to please! I'm either killing too many characters or not enough. There are NO sacred cows in this book. Just because there hasn't been many people die in the last few issues doesn't mean certain characters are safe. You'll see... you'll ALL see.

That being said I'm still enjoying the hell out of this book. I think the prison idea was just about the most incredible idea in modern Zombie lore. I would like to see a few more of the minor characters get their moment in the spotlight, like Billy (that's Hershel's kid right??)

Yes, and I've been meaning to do more with him for some time. Don't worry, everyone will get at least a brief moment to shine at some point in the series... unless I kill them.

Couple of questions for ya:

1) Any chance of Lori just having a normal healthy baby? Or is it destined to be born Zombie-fied?

That remains to be seen. She may even give birth to that baby some day.

2) Any chance of visiting a Zombie Disney World/theme park of some sort?

Yes... that's the big event for issue 100.

3) Carol has gone batshit crazy. Can you kill her please?

What would be the fun in that.

4) What's the long term plan for prison life? Is this going to be a permant HQ?

Would you leave were you in their situation?

5) Can we expect Rick to gain a Chainsaw for a right hand anytime soon?

Maybe a laser gun... not a chainsaw.

Thanks Robert. One of these days, gussy up your friggin myspace page!

Zach Langlois

Oh, yeah... that thing. Uh... maybe some day. I actually hate MySpace pages with so much shit on them you can't read them... and that damn music that starts up when you look at the page... ugh.

I'll put a sunburst or a rainbow or something on mine someday. Until then it'll be super boring and super plain.

Well, kids... enjoy the Christmas Story on the following page... in January!

I'll see you back here next month for more happy go lucky FUN...

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

We're on the cusp of being on schedule for the first time in a while! Again, I apologize for the sporadic shipping schedule of 2006. So far, 2007 is looking to totally make up for it though--but enough about boring schedule stuff.

CLAYBURN MOORE sculptor extraordinaire (and sculptor of those lovely **WALKING DEAD** zombie busts) has recently completed his full-sized, full-body **RICK GRIMES** statue! I promise we'll be showing you photos **VERY VERY** soon, but for now, let me just say--**IT'S TOTALLY DAMN AWESOME!!** Granted, I would probably say that if it wasn't--I mean, we need to sell these things, and I really like Clayburn--but **I PROMISE** this statue will blow you away. It's simply amazing.

I'll have price, ordering info and release dates for you very soon--so stay tuned!

Now--enough of that--let's answer us a bit of mail.

Hey Robert.

I have been following TWD since issue 1 and have loved every step of the way. I just had to write in though, after reading the letters page to issue 32. It left me so bloody angry!

I was in shock at how people are accusing you of racism! When I read the issue in question, yes it was brutal. Yes I was shocked. But I just don't understand why people are writing in complaining the way they are.

One guy even mailed to say he was dropping the book! What the hell? First off, these are your characters. You can do whatever the hell you like to them. And of course it isn't a true story, but the world is a crap place. Domestic violence and rape happen every day. Surly surviving in the environment they are in is just as brutal? I see this book as a drama that includes the experiences of real life, just with them being set in a zombie ridden dystopia.

So, bad shit is gonna happen! It's not gonna stop just because Zombies are now the majority. And the "breaking down of a strong black woman to the lowest of the low" and "chocolate rape fantasy" comments! A woman got raped! It doesn't matter what race she is!

Sorry Robert, I just had to get my point across and let you know this is still one of the best books on the shelf.

Oh, and sorry there are so many exclamation marks, as well!!!!

Keep up the good work,
Daniel

I'm sure people are sick of reading about this at this point... and I certainly am. But I would like to just say that this book features a LOT of bad stuff happening to a LOT of people. The only way to ensure that nothing bad happens to the minority characters is to not HAVE any minority characters in the book. And that would be absurd.

I promise the next character to be raped will be a strong white male.

Hi!

I discovered Walking dead long time ago in a comics shop in France. Comics in original version are hard to find, and zombie comics are more hard to find!

Actually, there are just the 1 to 6 issues which are translated in French. Sadly, the company who was in charge to translate is out of business and I'm in obligation to buy comics from England or USA.

Do you think that one day, another company will translate the comics in French ?

I'm told DELCOURT will be taking over the French language publication of the book. I'm tickled pink--I LOVE Delcourt.

In other ways, I'm a fan of all that talking about zombies, and I think you've done the best zombie's comic I've ever read!

Keep doing good job!

Laurence

Thanks for writing--keep on the lookout for the Delcourt edition of the book.

This one is gonna be a quicky... just wanted to let you know issue 33 made my stomach churn and feel bad after reading it. That was utterly disgusting. I LOVED IT!!! Keep it up cuz I bloody love this book.

Mr Lumpstastic

It made my stomach turn, too. I'm glad you liked it.

Dear Bob,

I love your work in INVINCIBLE and of course THE WALKING DEAD. This is the first time I've ever written a letter in to a comic so, yes, you popped my cherry, buddy *blush*. Your writing is great, love your plot twists and character development, but I'm sure you've heard all this many times before, so straight to the point then... issue #29. WAIT! Don't trash my letter yet! I know you've probably had your fill of letters about that issue but I want to address a letter in issue #32 written by Sundjata Abubakari concerning the rape of Michonne. I completely understand where you're coming from. As a writer, you don't want to be constrained by people's biases and fears, you just want to write a great story that will really move people. Being an artist myself I get that, BUT as a black man I also understand Sundjata's outrage as well.

The racism that black people have had to and still have to deal with from every form of media is very overwhelming. All the points he made about the white man's constant portrayal of the black woman as an over-sexed plaything are true. Comics are especially geared towards adolescent white males fantasies. All that being said, issue #29 was great writing like every other issue before it, but it also hit on a very big nerve, perhaps the biggest nerve in the states...white dominance over people of color. The imagery and situation reinforced a very negative and painful stereotype/fantasy. If you want the honest truth Mr.Kirkman a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue. Disgusting and Disturbing, but so is a great deal of America's History with people of color.

I'm not blaming you for that Mr. Kirkman, but my goal is to try to get you to understand. Cultural understanding and sympathy seem to be blindspots for many of us, unfortunately. I'm asking that you try to step out of yourself for a moment and look at this from another angle.

And please don't think I'm saying bad things should not happen to characters because of race(there was a black man that got shoot in cold blood by a white man in a past issue after all).

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I must stop reading the Walking Dead...

Still Invincible fan,
Charles L.

Okay... okay--this has gone to an all new level. I--I'm speechless, and what I'm talking about is THIS:

"If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue."

If you want the honest truth?! Really?! You know this to be the case? I am blown away by this statement. Are you saying that white people, in general, or as a WHOLE ("a great deal") hate black people SO MUCH that they would be aroused by the sight of a black female being brutalized?!

WHA--?!

That's ABSURD. I'm know there is racism in the world--I know it's a horrible thing and I KNOW I will never truly experience it myself and will never truly understand what it's like to be faced with it. But I don't for a MINUTE--not for a SECOND think that racism is so common that "a great deal" of white readers masturbate to drawings of a beaten up black woman's face.

That's horrific.

I don't even know what to say... next letter.

Yo, Letter hacks,

I just read issue #32 and I can't believe it, but the book just keeps getting better. There's always a fear in the back of my head that the book will jump the shark or get boring and it just never happens. This is one of the only comics where an entire issue can be nothing but talk and still kick ass. Kirkman, you're my favourite writer in comics right now (This excludes Stan Lee), keep up the good work, man. Also, Charlie keeps getting better and better, I don't even miss Tony any more and that

is saying something; I'm most definitely picking up "Rock Bottom". Now I got some questions.

1) Glenn and Maggie obviously have sex pretty often. Are they using protection or taking any measures to make sure Maggie doesn't get pregnant or what?

They bury a potato in the prison yard in the light of the full moon every month. That pretty much takes care of things. Really--it WORKS!

2) Michonne is the most badass character in the book. I love that the Governor didn't break her spirit and that she went back for revenge; she's a great character, but how do you pronounce her name? I've been saying (mish-own-e). Is that right?

I've said it like that before, but I'm told it's actually ME-SHAWN by people who actually know things about the French language. It's a French name--and I like it... that's really all I know. If any readers have a better interpretation I'd love to hear it.

3) Was Lori such a bitch before the dead started rising or did that happen after?

Heh.

4) Any chance you could talk your boy McFarlane into producing a Walking Dead action figure set? We could get Rick with hatchet and removable hand, Michonne with katana and zombie companions, and of course, a talking Lori figure who bitches when you press her button. Please?

I'll see what I can do. Don't hold your breath just yet, though.

5) Andrew ran off like a punk bitch, if I recall. With the prison being so close to Woodbury, any chance the Governor got his ass?

Who knows--it's certainly possible.

6) Do you have one of those old school nicknames like they used to do in old Marvel books? Like "Rocksteady" Robert or "Kooky" Kirkman or somethin'? You need one, man, only then are you official.

I have yet to be issued such a nickname.

7) Is Rick gonna get a groovy chain-saw to fight off the Evil Dead?

Nope--but thanks for playing.

Alright, thanks for taking the time.

P.S. Invincible #33 was one of the single best superhero comics I ever read in my life. No shit.

P.P.S. I been reading comics since I was a kid and this is the first letter I've ever sent to one.

P.P.P.S. Sorry, but I gotta say, Ant-Man #2 was FUCKED UP. That guy is really irredeemable.

Peace,
Jamal A. Shakir

Yeah--you should all be out there buying The Irredeemable Ant-Man!

Kirkman,

I am an avid reader of TWD. I read both the story and the letters page. The letters page in issue 32 has really pointed out your clear disregard for peoples' skin color and lifestyles. Sundjata Abubakari really opened my eyes to you and your bigot/racist ways!

I really didn't think much about the beating and raping of Michonne until recently. I figured that she was a fictitious character portrayed as a strong, independent woman who survived out in the vast and very dangerous world of zombie-ville, USA. I am sure you have a very large following of African American, sword wielding, independent, strong willed, educated, football-watching women in your mass of comic book reading fans, but what about the rest of us?!?

I have gone back and re-read the entire run of TWD and I have not seen a single, white, late 20's, skinny, pale, balding, video game controller wielding, 20 sided die rolling, message board posting, action figure collecting, basement of his parents living, comic book reading, male in your books!! Not even the living dead in your books match this vast group!! I expected at least one zombie walking around with a keyboard blogging his adventures as the undead.

Then again, if they were represented in zombie form, they would have gone through the pain and suffering of being eaten alive, left for dead, gone through the pain of dying, coming back to life as the undead only to have to deal with the pain of rigormortis, with an unending hunger for human flesh only to realize that all the good humans were eaten months ago or locked nicely in that prison over the hill (if we could only figure out how to open that fence). Clearly, I realize that beating and raping of one woman is much much worse than an eternity unending hunger and pain you have subjected on the masses of all other races, sexes, and cultures that 99.9% of undead people represented in your book!

But I bet your fans only concentrate on the pain and suffering of your living characters. The ones that you took the time to give a name, feelings, a background but most importantly the ability to use a

sword to chop up the living dead and the soon to be dead that happen to be living.

Your book is an adult book. It has adult content. It should have an adult audience. Your book is set in a desperate time. People should realize that desperate times call for desperate measures. I love the pain, misery, hopelessness, violence and gore of your book. If you lost any of that, we could rename it "Archie" and I wouldn't have to check every week to see if I GET to read your book.

Don't let the haters out there change the way you write this book.

As always, keep up the good work.
Mike Gineman

Thank you for the support, I do appreciate this.

Let me just say--when I wrote the issue, I didn't realize what a hot-button subject it would be. Rape, of course, is always going to be something that pushes people's buttons, but I didn't realize the fact that Michonne is black would make it that much worse.

I sympathize with the black community, despite whatever I've said before in these letters columns. I can't imagine how difficult it must be to deal with racism on a daily basis--and have it be such a prevalent part of your life.

But I don't think it's fair to expect me to acknowledge years of mistreatment and offensive representation in entertainment--and then allow THAT to guide my stories. I just want to do a comic book about survival in terrible--harsh situations. Call it irresponsible if you want--but I just want to tell my stories. It's impossible for me to consider the historical context of EVERYTHING I do in this book and anticipate how every single reader will interpret it.

You think this book is late now? If I started over thinking things to that degree--it'd NEVER come out.

Am I just digging myself a deeper hole by printing the letters dealing with this stuff? I can't even tell any more.

Kirkman,
I want to start this out by saying I'm a huge fan of INVINCIBLE - I honestly think it's the best comic being published right now. It is superbly paced, it always features action of some sort, and its characters are archetypal without being stereotypical; it's excellent.

Now for the criticism: I have been following THE

WALKING DEAD since issue one. I was a huge fan of the Zombie genre in those days, and I loved it from the moment I picked it up. But that love has been dwindling steadily since Rick & Company reached the prison complex. I understand that the Warren Ellis-ization of comics has been going on for nearly a decade now, but c'mon Kirkman! The decompression is KILLING ME on this book. Issue thirty-two encompasses a whole *fifteen minutes* in the lives of the characters, which would be fine if it didn't equate to a month of my life spent waiting. By my count, this story arc has been going on for eight issues, from the moment the helicopter first appeared. It could have been done in three. The result is that twenty five percent of the issues contain five percent of the total storyline. To me, this is a major disappointment's from a book that seemed positively incredible after issue five.

Ryan Dolley, Detroit MI

I seriously doubt the story from 25 to 32 could be told--without cutting out important stuff, in three issues. You're certainly entitled to your opinion, but I'm just not sure that's an accurate statement. There will always be an important 30 minutes in this series--that DESERVES a whole issue--and then there will be issues that take place over a matter of weeks.

But this ISN'T a finite series that's building toward a climactic end. This series is about the journey and experiences of the characters--and when something important is happening to them--that will have immense consequences on future issues... I'm going to take my time.

And that's it for me pissing off people this month!

I'll leave you with a preview for THE PIRATES OF CONEY ISLAND which begins on the next page. This is a great series written by Rick Spears and drawn by Vasilis Lolos. Rick is the writer and co-creator of TEENAGERS FROM MARS which is an EXCELLENT book--and DEAD WEST and some other books that are quite good. This one is no different.

So enjoy the preview and I'll see you back here in a week or so for issue 36.

No--really.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Be back here very soon for issue 37. We're monthly or better from here on out--you watch!

Not a lot of time right now as this issue needs to go to the printer and this letters column is looking to be a long one--so here goes!

On to the mail!

Wow, first let me say that you are the 2nd comic book writer I have ever written to. The first being Mike Carey after the final issue of his Lucifer series. You are easily my favorite writer next to him and your series Walking Dead was the lynchpin that re-entered my mind back into the world of comic books. So thank you for all your work.

That being said.

WOW!

I just finished reading #33 of Walking Dead and I was completely floored. I knew at the end of #32 that the Governor was going to get some come uppin's, but never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the torture he went through. I have never shouted "WHOA!" at a comic book before and this issue was simply amazing. It was just brilliant writing and Charlie Adlard is also brilliant with the way he interpreted everything you put out there. And the cliffhanger with the governor's demise was priceless. I didn't really care for him at first (besides for the obvious reasons) but now I simply can't wait to hear what has finally happened to him.

Thank you so much. Your writing has affected me like only a select few have...

Ben Beesley

Thanks for the kind words, Ben--I'm glad you enjoyed the issue.

Kirkman,

I love your comics, Walking Dead and Invincible. Issue 33 was very intense. My question is probably obvious but I must ask anyway, does Michonne suffer from multiple personalities? I could not tell if she was faking or not at the end of the issue.

Have a great day,
Joe Hampton

You want me to just give something like that away here in the letters column? All I'll say is that it certainly SEEMS that way right now--doesn't it?

Kirkman,

From the Desk of the Governor,

Memo to self- Next time a wild-eyed woman with a samurai sword shows up, DO NOT SCREW WITH HER!!!

God DAMN, that was effin' BRUTAL!!! Keep up the good work.

Shawn Michael Scott
Brandon, FL

Thanks.

Mr. Kirkman,

This was the most sickening and disgusting thing I have ever seen in a comic book. Kirkman you are sick for writing it, Adlard is sick for drawing it and let me not forget Mr. Rathburn.

Keep up the good work guys!
Raymond Singh

Are you not sick for reading it?

I want to thank you for not shying away from your depiction of the governor's torture in issue 33. I abhor violence in real life and am therefore often conflicted about reading comics that employ violence in their stories. Often violence is obscured or stylized in such a way as to make it more palatable, but your comic reminded me that I have the same concerns in seeing Batman beat up a crook as I do in this torture scene.

This issue made me reconsider my overall reading habits; I too easily ignore my apprehensions in search of entertainment. I considered giving up TWD after Michonne was raped and tortured in 28/29. The portrayal of violence was

pc4unsettling and left me concerned, but I recognized that this could be intended as a literary device, so I stayed to see your conclusion—after all, I haven't been able to anticipate where your storylines have proceeded. I was hoping for an end I found both entertaining and congruent with my ethical views (though I certainly didn't have one in mind!), but instead it appears I was simply to be made to hate the governor in order for the torture issue to provide a climax. I won't accept the use of violence as a payoff for violence.

Individuals do things I find reprehensible, and in a setting such as the world of TWD it is easy to see how people's baser instincts may more easily be expressed. I understand that these are fictional characters working within this world, but you and I are very much real and have responsibilities to ourselves and others. As such, I feel that to satisfy my personal ethics I cannot continue to support this book, even though I usually find it so engrossing and entertaining. I am headed back to my comic shop to return this issue and remove the title from my pull list. I'm not sure which titles will follow TWD off my list; I recognize that these concerns are applicable to many other works.

Thank you for considering my views. I hope they at least engender discussion; I know I have much to reassess myself.

Best wishes,
Dan Felty

Different strokes for different folks, I suppose. Violence is a part of life, a part of history--it's written into our very genetic code. You've never been angry enough to punch a wall? You're going to have a HARD time avoiding violence in the world we live in. The Walking Dead should be the LEAST of your worries.

Good luck.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

After reading Walking Dead 33, I've been debating for the past day whether to drop the series entirely. The graphic, extended portrayal of the torture suffered by the mayor, while understandable from a storytelling perspective, simply struck me as too much of a descent into torture for torture's sake. Even worse, it smacks of lazy writing; such a detailed descent into gore seems to indicate an inability to more succinctly portray the savagery of Michonne's revenge (and the further dehumanization this revenge may unleash upon her). While I can understand the need to graphically portray the horror of living in a world filled with zombies, this past story arc has moved beyond supernatural cruelty to a kind of voyeuristic torture porn, one that I don't enjoy reading. While I've ultimately decided to stick around to see what the next few issues might bring (reluctantly, I might add), if the series continues to seek stomach-turning instead of storytelling, well, I'm hope the new fans you attract are sufficient to replace the ones who've left.

Sincerely,
James Seidler

"Voyeuristic torture porn." I wonder if we can put that on the cover.

The sum of the story of The Walking Dead is far greater than one part. I find it bizarre, frankly, that a long time reader can read ONE ISSUE and start to worry the series will be that way from now on. If I did an issue that was light-hearted and had jokes in it, would you worry this was becoming a comedy book? I think issues 34, 35 and 36 have proven that the Woodbury arc, while have vast repercussions on the overall story of the series, have NOT changed the book to an unrecognizable degree.

Have a LITTLE faith.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

Hey, wasn't this issue just a liliittle sadistic? Sure the guvnr did bad things to Michonne, but nothing like that, right?? And that was the whole issue! Hopefully this is the end of Woodbury and we can get back to the real cast, huhn? Some real drama there, but best to bury it all. As for Ant-Man, in regards to my letter (and your response) printed in TWD #33, well, Stan Lee may have created Ant-Man, yes. But as I recall he gave him several colors on the original costume: Red, some blue and, you guess it-- Black! Spider-Man is going back in black too, ya know. I'm looking forward to another Kirkman series soon, maybe at Image! Not that I know there's gonna be one, it's just, I want there to be one. Yeah. Hey maybe Michonne will stay violent and turn psycho-killer back at the prison, huh? Who was that little girl, anyway? The guvnr's daughter? How'd she break down that door in that one scene? Cause it looked like she did anyway. So, again, a down issue this time. I think for one issue a month, we deserve more dialog than this! Oh, and I think you should write Ultimate Spider-Man, too! That is if BMB ever comes up for air.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Did you say NEW SERIES?! Surely by now you've all heard about THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN?! It's my new creator-owned series from Image, debuting on MAY 7th--that's right--FREE COMIC BOOK DAY. That means the first issue of this cool new series is ABSOLUTELY FREE! No need to gamble on a new series and waste those hard-earned bucks. Just swing by your local retailer and grab a copy of issue 1. If you like it, come back later and buy issue 2. If you don't like it--you have no soul and should seek spiritual help.

MAY 7th!!

Mr. Kirkman,

Michonne goes HARD CORE! Yikes. I was expecting her to go Postal on the Gov', but this issue has got to be the most violence I have ever enjoyed in all my years of reading comics. "When I nailed your Prick to the board." I had to pause and let that sink in for a minute or two. I flashed back to the scene in Pulp Fiction where Butch goes back to save Marsellus from the clutches of the guys with the Gimp, only Michonne uses the

hardware she picked up. The spoon goes from the ass blaster, to the eye ball popper. My only complaint is that the sword on the floor looks to be really close to the Gov' - he shouldn't have needed to dive for it, but I can forgive.

**Yeah--cut us some slack on that one.
Thanks.**

Crazy shit like this is why I love WD. I started with issue 18, and was hooked. Had to run back to Comics Etc. in Rochester, NY and pick up all the TPB and back issues that I could score. Thank you for putting out such a compelling mag. How about a little WD Giant Sized issue in the near future? You know your man-friend Bendis did it in Powers - I don't think that the WD should be out done, do you?

I think the chances of me being outdone by BENDIS these days have dwindled down to slim and none. You're a HACK, B!! ;-)

Can't wait to see round II. You know the Gov' won't die from these flesh wounds, would he?

Thanks for writing my favorite monthly,
Andrew Cup

The current health status of the Governor remains to be seen.

Hey Kirkman--

Thanks for crossing my line.

I've been not writing a letter about Michonne for what seems a long time now. I'm pretty sure I scribbled something about high hopes for her character when the first cover with her was previewed. Kind of didn't matter what her story was, I just wanted it to start. But issue after issue, the story never really got into her point of view or spent very much time even around her. But whatever, you know? Month after month each issue was 1) always over way too fast, 2) awesome-lookin', and c) always provocative. You couldn't ask for more. Sometimes I've been frustrated (by my own unfulfilled desires), sometimes thrilled, but the letter (about Michonne and/or everything else that was/is happening in TWD and it's place and comment in our ongoing times yadda yadda) never got written.

Mostly because it didn't have to be. Because I was in good hands. I might want this or that to proceed at a different pace, wish this or that had gone differently, but that's life. Where other comics make me think, "That guy doesn't know shit about shit," when they're frustrating me -- you know, like I have such a deeper understanding about how things would REALLY go in a world where people wear costumes or whatever -- by contrast the frustrations you've presented in TWD always seemed... like the frustrations of life.

Immutable. Deaf to a plea. But also real, and better faced-up-to than imagined away -- a tactic that's never worked. I would read the frustrated letters and laugh, or rail in your defense; jackass clowns, angry that you weren't taking their psychic story notes.

Aw, man, and then you went for Michonne's

rape arc. Rape in entertainment is so tired to me. But what is zombie fiction about, if not the question of who we are, and what would all-of-us-among-us become if unfettered by law and institutionalized power? And rape by despots is a trope in zombie fiction by that very principle. Predators are certainly among us still. But I didn't like it. ...but I didn't write, either. Because I'm not going to get everything I want, much less when (vicariously) living in the zombie apocalypse. Still, it smarmed; here I feel that I've been patiently waiting to get to the Michonne storyline, and it's this. It stinks. Oh, well. Figgered, Michonne'll get her revenge and then we can move on -- hopefully to who she is and what her deal is, although right about now I'm really wondering what's going on back with the others.

But here we are at issue #33 (imagine my surprise walking into some comic shop on a Friday and seeing the cover, after having been to MY *unnamed* shop Wednesday and not seen it!) and it gets to the torture of the Governor. And it's sweet vengeance. Now Kirkman, this is where we get to you crossing my "line" and all. Looks like I finally had to write. Here I thought we were deep in my touchy territory with the rape and that I was going to be able to ride it out. But my experience reading this torture issue was a real harrower, from the anticipation when I flipped through the first few pages, thinking, "Oh, yeah! Here we go..." I loved it. And I wanted it. And I didn't want it to be short. I wanted you to take your time (and see, it's checkmate Michonne in three pages -- and SHE wants her time, too). Talk about getting what you wish for.

Thing of it is, I do believe there is a kernel of hate at the core of the human psyche. Dark times have been the context in which TWD operates since it first hit the shelves, and Regis Christ! Kirkman, has shit just been getting heavier and heavier, or what? I can only imagine that having a newborn gives you a vibrant point of reference for the things happening both inside and without the United States these last years, and their implications for the future. It's that dark core of humanity's which is ascendant right now, institutionalized, and which has led us to where we are. Now that I think of it, Romero's DAY OF THE DEAD is the story I associate with my first instance of that sort of rogue militia-crazy, intimate physical threat vibe that resonates throughout the late Governor's story arc. And DOTD was released in '85, when the fruits of what Reagan (and Thatcher) was doing (with tax cuts to the super-rich leading to the gutting of national reserves, the unfettering of corporate desires, and seeding international terror with the Central American death squads and Afghanistan and whatnot) and which have led us directly to where we are today, would just be starting to show. But only just. And only if you were paying attention. Romero's prescience is staggering.

Whoo boy am I long-winded in getting to the point. Sorry, Kirkman. Didn't mean to get my politics in your comics. Mmm... they taste great together! (sorrysorry, couldn't help myself) But it does get to my point. I feel like there's also great hope and capacity for love in humans. That part's getting its ass kicked in the bigger picture right now. All around. So I guess I'm feeling a little sensitive about the whole Mitchum Love-Hate thing is all. You know,

feeling like we're fighting to keep the humane part of humanity's proverbial head above water and there you go walking me deep into real identification with hate.

And that, in half a dozen nutshells, is why I write. To give thanks. For not being tepid or half-assed in these times of particularly tepid, half-assed entertainment. For taking me places that I don't want to go, in ways that I can't but help understand. Here's to hoping you find the forces of hope slugging away in there when you look inside your head, Kirkman.

Because that's what we need.

Some lingering thoughts on the progeny of DAY OF THE DEAD... The dove-tailing fears of the rogue milita and rape have become a constant in zombie fiction, escalating in excess long after the insight has been wrung dry (good ol' rape never gets old). This particular manifestation has come to dominate as the face of evil in the imagined future. Most recently in popular fiction, 28 DAYS LATER and Briane Keene's pedestrian CITY OF THE DEAD come to mind. Cannonized, calcsified and brittle -- even if it IS the odds-on favorite of how things might play out today. So I read Stephen King's CELL last weekend, not expecting to like it (even though I consider King to have been "back" for a number of years now); the cell phone angle is really corny in my mind. But it turns out King takes a fresh swing at what to do with that kernel of hate at the center of mankind's mind. And that cell phone angle works, and has some real cultural frisson about it. He's a Master. He knows how to give you the iconic genre stuff you want, but also throw it around in unexpected ways. And he telescopes his rules for proximity throughout in a way that I thought was fucked up (in the good way).

Oh, and have you checked out the movie DEAD CREATURES? It's British, '01, regular city girls, slowly rotting away in the underground, watching TV and eating "leftovers" from tupperware. But not cutesy at all! I think it's about the fears they were having about Mad Cow. Not the world's best film, but ripe with interesting ideas and a personal zombie favorite.

And we couldn't possibly move on without commenting on the Adlard/Rathburn team. Outstanding. It's like they keep getting... deeper. And Adlard's characterizations and performances keep notching up. Good stuff. A major part of what I'm looking forward to, issue to issue.

Wow--I see we're getting to some questions in a minute and wanted to say thanks for writing such a long damn letter! It means a lot to me to have someone spending so much of their time on something like this. It's a real testament to your love for the book and it really warms my heart.

Although, I must say, I was reading going "he hates it, no he likes it, no he hates it, no he--" boy is my head spinning. Anyway--onto your questions.

QUESTION! Do you have a take on what's caused the outbreak? I'm not asking for it, just, do YOU have any leading theories?

Honestly, I would never nail something like

this down until I had to WRITE it and I don't ever plan on writing it. There's a number of causes in my head and few scenes I have in mind to explain things--but I don't see any reason to nail things down to a definitive answer until it has to be committed to the page. And since that will never happen...

QUESTION! Do you know who any of the characters in other, untold parts of this world would be? Or do you know what other storylines you would pursue (in a world where you were writing other TWD stories)?

There are certainly other people out there in the rest of the world. We will never see ALL of them in this title, though.

QUESTION! Do the cry babies that whine about the release schedule know that they should just be giving thanks for getting that good shit every time?

Well, I'm fine with people complaining about the schedule when we fall behind--that just means they want to read the book--and that's what I WANT. But I hope they stop complaining SOON because this book is so on schedule now.

QUESTION! Will we be finding out more about Michonne soon? Ever? Will she be playing larger role in the community? (I'm assuming there's a there to go back there to... watch, the prison is in flames)

We'll learn more about Michonne as the story continues, I promise.

QUESTION! Where/how can I see this TWD Christmas episode?

I just printed it in issue 34. Hope you liked it.

QUESTION! Hahaha! People still think you bit 28 Days!

Sandra Bullock rocks.

QUESTION! At the Prison, did Michonne ever work out or practice forms and stances outside? Where the others might watch?

If she did--we didn't see it.

QUESTION! When will anyone ask Michonne to teach them some martial arts? Do you have a take on specific styles she knows? Or is she just an angry woman who stumbled across a sword?

She doesn't know any formal martial arts. She took fencing in college.

QUESTION? More kung fu!

I'll see what I can do.

QUESTION! How PSYCHED are you for Tony Moore's return to FEAR AGENT? AND their plans to trade arcs between him and Opena?

I'm psyched to see Tony drawing ANY comic. I wish they came out more frequently.

Keep up the good work, Kirkman. This is one of a tiny number of titles that I look forward to with real anticipation. So where are we going now?

thanks again,
Andrew Garcia-Price

We're going on to the next letter, you long-winded fool!

Just wanted to let you know that Michonne getting pay back on the governor was justified!!! Great story line and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Bobby W. Chamberlain

P.S. what if that guy helping them escape is a spy leading the town to the prison?

You may be onto something.

Dear Kirkman,

Holy Shat, issue 33 was amazing. I always wondered how sadistic Michonne was. It kinda makes me wonder if she's done this before. Even though it went by so fast, I had to look over every square inch of each scene numerous times to grasp it all. By far this is my favorite issue. Keep up the good work.

-Shane Marsh

Thanks.

Kirkman,

First off, thanks for writing this book. I came in around issue 16 or 17. I was bored and had down time between jobs in the field and I stopped by a record shop that sold comics. I asked the guy if there were any zombie comics and he directed me to TWD. Out of curiosity I purchased a couple of issues and read them in the parking lot. I was instantly hooked and continued to read the second one while driving, yikes! I think most people remember what they were doing while they read their first WD comic; it's like remembering where you were on 9/11.

Not QUITE the same, but go on...

Subsequently I returned to a larger comic book store (The Comic Bug, in Manhattan Beach, Ca, which to my dismay partially burned down due to a fire at the cleaners next door). Anyways, I bought the TPB's and caught up immediately and have read them every month since then. Returning to the store I have also begun to follow DMZ, Y, Invincible, Goon and a few others. I even bought TWD issue number one on ebay for about \$55.00. Will you be at Comicon in 2007? I'd like to have it signed! Anyhow, here are a few questions/grievances.

I'll be there. I'm sure I can be found at the Image booth or the Marvel booth at various times during the con.

1.) To the guys that were offended by Michonne's

rape and torture, let me remind you that Morgan is raising his son Duane. It would have been such a cliché if his mother was raising him and his father had been out of his life since he was an infant. Tyreese was democratically elected to lead the group, Rick was not, so an african-american man is now the leader of the group. Also, if you had to be stuck in zombie central, I'm sure most of us would pick to be with Tyreese or Michonne WAY before we'd pick Glenn, Dale, Axel, Carol, Lori...ok, maybe I'd pick Carol, but that's besides the point. You get my point, the two proven and battle hardened survivors are black. Whereas the weaklings, the psychos and most of the zombies are white, or grey.

Amen, brother!

2.) This question is a bit more personal. I have written short stories for many years. Since reading WD I have wanted to write my own comics, not zombie stories though. Where would I start off in getting my scripts noticed or accepted? Since I am ok financially I would be doing this for fun. I think that gives me an edge right?

It's an uphill battle no matter what. There's too much to say for me to fit it in here--there are countless essays and stuff written on the subject that can be found on the internet pretty easily.

3.) Have you seen the trailer for the new Day of the Dead? You Tube it if you haven't it's interesting, though typically Hollywoodish.

I'm still holding out hope that it could be cool. I wish Ving was playing the same character from Dawn though.

Thanks for reading this. I hope it is published and I can have some small part in the great WD.
Manny Lerma

It's published--welcome to the smallest possible part of history available.

Hey Robert,

Issue 33 sure was great, but that is not what this letter is about. First I want to thank you for your recommendations you gave me a few issues back, I sure you don't remember but I was the guy who sent you the letter about how I was boycotting Image because of the whole Todd and Neil thing over Miracleman. I have added quite a few titles to my monthly pull now, everything from Girls to Invincible to Fell. I can't believe what I was missing. Don't get me wrong, I would love Neil to finish his story, but damn, I was really missing out. Secondly, I want back and reread the whole series and I think I noticed something so I have a few questions:

1) In issue 20, is that Thomas's dead body that the other zombie gets his intestine caught on and falls?

YES IT IS! I think you're the first to notice this. Good eye.

2) If it is, how the hell did he get his glasses

back on, at the end of issue 18 when Maggie shoots him he is not wearing them.

I think it's pretty obvious that he had a back-up pair in his pocket.

3) Is our gang going to go out looking for other survivors or try to contact anyone else after what Rick, Michonne and Glenn just went thru, I mean they all can't be bad (can they) ?

I think survival is the priority now--no need to find more people until you can safely live with the people you have.

Well that's all for now, oh yeah one last thing, I have been selling cars for about 5 years now, and if this comic thing doesn't work out give me a call, Big ugly guys like you do pretty well (just kidding)

Erik Porter

Did you just call me UGLY? I know for a fact and am a quite handsome dude. Next time I get shit like that from you I'm totally not printing your letter.

Yo Robert,

Just got issue #33..... I have a few words for you...

This has to be the most sick, twisted, gross, nasty, warped, cruel piece of work you have ever done.

Keep up the good work...

Rod Paddock

Glad you liked it.

Damn but issue #33 was THE most disturbing, most brutal thing I have ever seen in a comic. I have only one thing to say to you, you sadistic bastard.

God bless you.

Coming from an agnostic that pretty good praise. As I said in my first letter, I have been with this series from issue #1 and I'm still surprised at the unique twists. I mean everybody knows Michonne is crazy, but we didn't expect batshit insane. Some will undoubtedly say it was too much however and will bitch and moan about some sort of racist undertones. I didn't see them myself but some people just HAVE to read more into things than are really there. I actually got my wife who does get several comics on her own to read this issue! This is remarkable because she won't watch any zombie movies at all, she finds the whole concept disturbing on a deep psychological level. Anyway just wanted to say I'm still here and will continue buying this series until either you give up or I'm dead. On the other hand given what I'm reading why should I let a pesky little thing like death stop me?

P.S. Congrats on the baby and enjoy these first years as much as you can. My oldest, Autumn is 10 and the twins Emily & Kaitlin are 7. Those years passed quickly! (I had to mention them, after my first letter they wanted to see their

names in print not that I'd let them read the book just yet)

Chris Lenkevich

Thanks for writing.

Man, Kirkmonster...

I knew Michonne would exact her own form of revenge if she got the chance but never in darkest side of my mind did I envision what happened in issue #33. (Okay, I actually did envision it that way but I have to pretend my mind doesn't go that dark.) Man, she really put it to the man, so to speak and all of his various man parts. Well, after what he did to her, he deserved all that and maybe more. It would be amazing if he managed to pull through just to see what kind of crap he would try to pull next. I don't see how he is going to do that though. The various infections he should get from the things Michonne did (especially the spoon) probably will kill him if he doesn't die from shock.

That's what I'm saying.

Kirkman, I know you have to be channeling the zombie universe into your brain at night while you sleep. There is no way a nice boy from Kentucky could ever come up with this stuff...

You'd be surprised.

Keep on writing. I think maybe The Walking Dead is my favorite comic mag in the universe (don't worry, Invincible is right up there with it).

I hope you keep The Walking Dead walking for years to come.

Sincerely,
Michael

That's the plan--we want to keep this thing going well past issue 300!

Robert,
Did you change the book's title from "The Walking Dead" to "Snuff Films Monthly" and not tell anyone?

Yes I did--Image fucked up the logo.

In my opinion, you crossed the line in terms of gratuitous violence with issue #33 - and that's saying a lot for a zombie book! It's too much - severing arms, pulling out eyeballs, graphic torturing! Suddenly we entered the realm of pornographic violence. You know what I'm talking about, where you're just dishing out the blood and mayhem to the delight and quasi-sexual gratification of the sicko groundlings - "Oh, look at those quivering entrails! See the spraying blood? That gets me hot!!" It's pandering, Kirkman and it's the lowest level of creativity that a writer can aspire too.

What can I say--we all have our off months. I think the issue is an important part of the tapestry of this book--but what do I know?

Wouldn't it have been more effective to have Michonne walk into the governor's room and close

the door behind her - then leave it to the reader's imagination about what her wrath drove her to do? No, you have to descend to the depths that every moronic horror film director in this generation falls to - "I have to show everything and leave nothing to the imagination!" What we're talking about here is a real dearth of imagination and an excess of blood-thirstiness - that's not a good thing, Robert. The love of excessive violence cannot be healthy, psychologically speaking, yet the media insists on drenching us in an overabundance of bile, blood and body parts and then everyone wants to know why things like Columbine happen. Yes, we all have personal responsibility in terms of our behavior, but what about YOUR responsibility? Would you really want some dumb ass emulating the torture scene you portrayed in this issue? If one is trained up in a society where savagery is presented as a justifiable solution to one's problems, some idiot WILL invariably choose it and then we all have to live with the repercussions.

It was always my plan to NOT show what happened to Michonne--to show the "closed door" as you suggest. But then when it came time for HER revenge--I wanted to show every single action taken against the Governor (aside from a few done while he was passed out).

The idea is that you never SEE the evil person's actions... but when the good person does their thing--you see just how evil they can be. It make you question the character--and hopefully yourself--especially if you're cheering them on the whole way.

There was SOME thought that went into the whole thing.

After a while, you can't get images such as these out of your brain pan. Is this what you see when you close your eyes? Must be hard to sleep at night. Thanks for contributing to my insomnia.

Sissy.

At least when you had Michonne getting raped you didn't show it in detail, I suppose we should be grateful for that!

You know, I can put up with a certain amount of blood, IF it drives a story, but you were pandering and you know it. I'm done with the book. I've been with you from the beginning, but I can't in good conscience continue if you're going to assault me with this level of unjustifiable savagery. Too bad. I enjoyed the character development a great deal. It was a pleasure picking up the book every month.

I'm sorry that you made the decisions you did.

Brian Schiavo

Well, I was totally regretting that "sissy" remark until now! Again, it's absurd to me that one issue makes you change your opinion of what the book is. Won't you feel kinda silly if this is the ONLY issue like this out of a 300 issue run and all the other ones are issues you'd like.

Foolish, man...

You know what bothers me about the Governor? It's the fact that he's really more a mayor, as he is only in charge of this one city, not an entire state. It seems he may not even know all that much about this area, since he doesn't know that there is a huge prison so close to his own city....But he is one of the best written villains in all of comics- Thanks for that. For writing such a great book every month. I just read #33, and I was surprised to see that the "Governor" survived. That is a bold and great decision, as much as I'm sure everyone expected to see him disposed of for what he did to the group, the thought of him returning one day makes me anxious to find out what else you have planned for him. I heard that Ant-Man is going to be an ongoing, that's great, I love it! I bet people ask you alot, but do you have anything in the works for Marvel Zombies?

Yeah.

Marvel Zombies Vs. Army of Darkness is a five issue thing I'm NOT writing but I'm consulting on that will be out very soon (probably around the same time as this issue).

Then Marvel Zombies: Dark Days is a prequel one-shot that will be out in MAY that is by the original team of Me, Sean Philips, June Chung and Arthur Suydam on covers.

Also in May, Black Panther and the new Fantastic Four travel to the zombie-verse in the regular Black Panther monthly series.

Then, in October or so, Me and the gang are back for Marvel Zombies 2--which is going to y'know--blow doors off!

I would love to read more of that, it would be a guaranteed big seller, and I would hate to see anyone but you writing it. One question, are there super heroes in the walking dead universe? Or would that a separate title called Image Zombies?

Thank you for all your effort on all your books, Daniel Reeves

There are no superheroes in The Walking Dead universe. This book is kinda running along as if this was happening in the real world.

And that brings our fine letters column to a close! I'll see you all back here in a few short weeks for issue 37--which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH.

VIVA LA ON TIME COMICS!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Welcome to issue 37--I hope you enjoyed it. We're going to be taking a short break from answering mail this issue to run an interview I recently did with Andrea Voglino for "Alias/Il manifesto". This is going to be translated up for the Italian press but I figured I'd run it here for all you English speakers to take a gander at.

Enjoy!

1) You are considered one of America's "enfant prodige" comic writers. Tell us something about your first steps into the comic field.

My first step was getting a job at a comic shop during my senior year of high school. I worked at Red Rock Collectables in Lexington, Kentucky for two years. That was the first thing I did. While there, I learned how Diamond, the comic book distributor here in the United States, got books to the store, and how that worked out, how that generated a profit, I really paid attention to how everything from a retailer point of view worked out.

The comics biz is really simple. It's creator to publisher to distributor to retailer to reader. It's pretty easy to make those five steps happen on a SMALL scale. So I eventually became a publisher. I started Funk-O-Tron, my publishing company when I was twenty, about a year after I quit working at the comic shop and two years after graduating high school.

I published comics for two years. At first as a side job and later, I quit my day job at a lighting warehouse and started publishing full time. I published Battle Pope, which I wrote (and later republished in color at Image Comics) and a few other books I didn't work on.

Eventually, Battle Pope got me noticed at Image Comics. That allowed me to start writing more, because I didn't have to worry about publishing the work. I did a SuperPatriot mini-series for Erik Larsen and that led to me doing Tech Jacket, Invincible, Capes, Brit, The Walking Dead,

Cloudfall and Reaper at Image.

After working at Image for about a year or so some people at Marvel started to notice the work I was doing on Invincible at Image. Then The Walking Dead was a big success and Marvel started offering me work. I started on an ill-fated Sleepwalker series for their Marvel Epic imprint but that was cancelled before it came out and only the first issue was released (I wrote three issues). Then I was offered a Jubilee series, which I did, and a short run on Captain America. After that Marvel offered me an exclusive contract, but allowed me to continue working on Invincible and The Walking Dead.

That more or less brings us up to date.

2) From EC's "Shock Suspense Stories" to Marvel's "Tales Of The Zombie", from Dracula to Constantine, the American comic book scene has proven to be a real gold mine for the fans of the undead. Who are your favourite scare comics authors of the past? Let's talk a bit about the ones who've mostly influenced your vision.

I hate to admit it but I haven't read a whole heck of a lot of horror comics. I've read an odd issue or two of EC's old Tales from the Crypt series but I couldn't even begin to guess the creative team on that. I started reading comics in 1990 when I was 11 or 12 years old. By that time there weren't a lot of horror comics running and really, I got most of my comics at Wal-Mart for the first few years I collected so it was mostly Marvel comics and a few DC comics... that was all I had to choose from. The closest thing to horror comics I probably read was the first Batman/Predator crossover drawn by Andy Kubert... or really, I guess Hellboy would count.

I draw most of my horror inspiration from movies, more or less. Zombie movies, vampire movies, monster movies, whatever. I've always been a big fan of George Romero, Wes Craven, John

Carpenter, Clive Barker, Peter Jackson and the pile of others I'm more than likely forgetting.

3) Rick Grimes' saga had a great impact notwithstanding the success of the asian horror phenomenon and today's lavish computer-linked books. Did you expect such a success for something so gritty and down-to-earth? How do you explain it?

Lord no, I didn't expect The Walking Dead to be anything close to the success it has become. At first I wasn't even sure it would last 12 issues. I mean, you can't exactly admit to that while you're trying to promote a book. It was certainly ballsy on my part to promote this comic as "the zombie movie that never ends" when I wasn't sure it'd last more than a year--but y'know you do what you gotta do.

I didn't know how the market would react to the book--but more than anything, I just hadn't had a good track record up to that point. Battle Pope never sold well, Tech Jacket had been cancelled at issue six, Invincible was struggling to hang on due to low orders on that book at the time and I had no reason to think The Walking Dead would be any different.

I certainly wanted to write the book forever but what I want and what happens are rarely completely in-line with each other.

And yet--the book came out and was a near instant success. By the time issue 2 was in stores I had a pretty good feeling that the book was catching on. Sell though at the stores was doing really well and our orders had already started to shoot up, so things were looking good.

But even then--I didn't know we'd reach the level we're at now. Our sales on single issues are now at more than triple what our first issue sold and our sales continue to creep up at least a little bit every month. I've got a lot to be thankful for--that's for sure. I try to repay fans who support the book by delivering the best possible stories I can every month and by promising to stick with the book for as long as possible. I don't want to be one of those creators that has a hit and moves on, leaving someone else to handle things. I'd be happy writing this book twenty years from now.

I love working on this book.

4) In the first "Walking Dead" TP intro, you hinted that you're gonna chronicle Rick Grimes adventures for the whole of his life. How can you possibly do that? Did you have a masterplan from the very beginning or you're developing things "on the go"?

Well, keep in mind, Rick could die at any time--so that would chronicle his

adventures for the whole of his life right there. I seriously doubt Rick is going to live to be 80, and at the pace this comic usually runs at that would take about 300 years to reach. We're at issue 37 now and not even nine months have passed. Rick could only have two years to live and that could take another 100 issues to show.

Also, I don't think I ever said the book would end if Rick died. It could easily continue after his death.

As far as a master plan goes--I don't have one. When I started, I had mapped the book up to about where I am now, actually. I've, of course, changed some things here and there--and I've added stuff, and along the way I've come up with dozens of other things to do with the book that will keep it going and keep in interesting for years to come. I'm constantly thinking of new and horrible things that will happen to these characters. I love them so much, but I love doing terrible things to them.

So yeah, I do pretty much write things on the go from issue to issue, but I follow a larger plot I've got mapped out for some time. I like to play things fast and loose, though. That's how life is--we never know what's going to come next. So while I do have a road map--if a side road pops up on the horizon at the last minute, I don't hesitate to go that route knowing that I can eventually get back on the main road at a later date.

I keeps things interesting for me and hopefully the readers as well.

5) How much of yourself do you put in the character of Rick? How much of your personal experiences get on the pages of the books?

Well, at least a little bit. A lot of things in the book are based on how I think I might react in the situations the characters are put in. But really, half the fun of writing the book is making the characters do things I would never do--it keeps things interesting for me.

Now, Rick and his family are from Cynthiana, Kentucky that's where the first issue takes place. He wakes up in Harrison Memorial Hospital. I'm from Cynthiana, that's where I grew up--I got stitches in Harrison Memorial Hospital. The first artist on the book, Tony Moore is from there, too. So the way the places are drawn is more or less accurate as well. There are little changes here and there because I wanted certain things to happen but for the most part it's accurate. So that's a little bit of me in the book.

Ultimately, this book is about a group of very different people struggling to live and survive together. I try to make these

people as different and unique as possible... so at the end of the day there's not much of me in these characters. I worked at a pizza place like Glenn and I was massively in debt at one point like Allen and I'd love to ride around in an RV with two young girls in my later years like Dale, but honestly... that's pretty much it.

I still have both of my hands.

6) What's the big difference in working with different artists like Tony Moore and Charlie Adlard? Are there plans to get other artists on board? Who's your "dream artist" for TWD?

My dream artist is Charlie Adlard, really. Tony drew the first six issues and the first 24 covers. Tony is an amazing artist who I've known since the 7th grade and have worked with on numerous projects. Tony brought a lot to the table for the first volume of this series and I don't think anyone can deny that he's a fantastic artist. The problem was he couldn't keep on schedule with the book, it took him almost a year to do the first six issues and the schedule was starting to catch up to us.

Tony was getting other offers on other books with looser deadlines and so it was decided that he would move on and just do covers. When it came time to replace Tony I looked at a few artists before I settled on Charlie simply because I didn't think Charlie would do it.

Just to be sure, I offered him the gig and was shocked when he accepted. I had published Charlie's work in an anthology I put out back in the Funk-O-Tron days but never in a million years did I think he'd be willing to hop on *The Walking Dead*. By this point the book was a clear success, and I was able to offer him a guaranteed page rate just based on what our sales were at the time--but I had no idea the book would continue to climb in sales and become the hit it is today--and neither did Charlie. I'd always been a huge fan of Charlie's work. I first encountered his work on Larry Young's *Astronauts in Trouble* but Charlie has been around for YEARS (seriously, he's very old. Heh.). He's done work on nearly every major character at Marvel and DC from Batman to Spider-Man to Green Lantern to, well... you get the idea. I was jumping for joy when he signed on to start the book with issue 7.

And he's so professional and reliable he finished issue 7 right away and dove into issue 8 and got us back on schedule right away.

Charlie's art is much more gritty and dark than Tony's. I think it's a much better fit for what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go with the book. It also worked out that the book got much darker and violent as Charlie came on so

it really worked well with the tone. Charlie really hit his stride early on with the book and has only gotten better and better with every issue.

So Charlie is it for me. If he ever decides to move on--I'll worry about another artist then, but for now--I'd be happy to have Charlie finish out the book with me... in a few decades or so (he's not THAT old).

7) "The Walking Dead" seems to take direct inspiration from the narrative clichés of all George A. Romero's flicks. Why skipping other interesting character driven zombie Movies like "The Evil Dead", "Re-Animator" or "The Serpent and the Rainbow"? Why did you choose to stick to the "man-eating zombies" thing?

Well, I think most zombie movies follow Romero's "rules" at least partially. There are variations in the speed of the zombies and other minor things but for the most part things pretty much run in-line with what George Romero set up aside from a few exceptions. So, I kinda thought I'd do my part in cementing the "rules" in other works about Zombies. Vampires and Werewolves have these set rules that are used to varying degrees in all works of fiction featuring them... but zombies are sometimes used in vastly different ways. So I just wanted to be another person out there following the "rules" as I think they should be.

Also, these types of zombies lend themselves better to a long-term survival story that spans a number of years. I couldn't very well go the mad-scientist or the haunted cabin route and keep things interesting for years.

8) More on that. Unlike Romero, who gave his movies a strong political and satirical subtext, you seem to have put all your effort in character development and continuity. This seems quite funny, considering your "Battle Pope" stint and the frequent post-September Eleven references of today's so many mainstream comics.

I like to keep things as timeless as possible. I'd hate for the issues of today to date the work. I think I've kept things fairly universal in the book. I mean, once we all have cell phones implanted in our heads it'll be hard to argue this didn't take place in the past but for now at least I don't think there's anything that dates to work too terribly much.

9) Let alone the references to all survival horror's classics, seems to me that "The Walking Dead" is very akin to "grown-ups" comics like "Kings in Disguise", "Strangers in Paradise", "Blankets", etc. Which is quite surprising, if you think about the average "Wham-Bam" approach of Image Comics. After all these are the same guys of "Spawn" and "Savage Dragon"...

Ah, but you do Image a disservice by judging them by one book. They are also the company of *Leave it to Chance*, *A Touch of Silver*, *Age of Bronze*, *Ministry of Space*, *Fell*, *Hawaiian Dick* and countless other cerebral non-superhero books. Image is a company that can publish the wham-bam action of *Savage Dragon* and *Invincible* right next to the artiness of something like *Kabuki* or humor books like *Liberty Meadows* or *PVP*. Image is a truly unique and fantastic comic book publisher and I think *The Walking Dead* is just another quality book that fits in well with their overall line-up.

But yeah, the book is about the characters. I want people to care about the characters and want to see what happens to them next--above all else, this is what's most important with the book. Right now the American comics market is in the middle (or near the end) of a horror comics boom, or more specifically a zombie comics boom. They're everywhere. I don't think there's a publisher in comics that hasn't done at least one zombie book in the last five years. And that's going to bust eventually, soon, I think. Pretty soon people are going to be sick of zombie books. And if this book was solely about "zombies" and had little else to offer--the book might be hurt by that bust--and honestly it could still be hurt. But hopefully people will see there's much more to this book than simple zombie action and gore.

To be honest--I wouldn't have any fun writing this book if it was just zombie nonsense all the time. I'm much more interested in chronicling the lives of these characters than simply figuring out ways for them to die gruesome deaths.

10) although zombies have developed a loyal following during their ventures on the silver screen, comicwise they've never experienced a success like the one they had with "The Walking Dead" or "Marvel Zombies". How do you explain that?

I'm totally awesome? All joking aside--I have no clue. *Marvel Zombies*, I think, is a success because it's something Marvel has NEVER done before. It's something that's just shocking to see Marvel allow to be published. I did things in that book I thought I was going to be fired over--but they were fine with it. And I've got to think that at least contributed to its success.

With *The Walking Dead*--I don't really know. I think it has very little in common with other Zombie comics in that we focus on the characters so much. I'd like to stick with the book to the point that there aren't many zombies left in the book. I'd love to be able to write this comic for twenty years or more--to the point where the characters (that are left) are building houses and only see a zombie once every few months--and

the book is more about reestablishing civilization than it is about continually protecting themselves.

Most other zombie comics are just short-term cash grabs, really. Just do a one-shot of five or six issues and move on. And when you do that--you really don't have the room to do anything that hasn't been done better in countless movies. Now there are, of course, exceptions to that--like *Remains* by Steve Niles and Kieron Dwyer, which I thought was great. But for the most part, I don't think other zombie books offer up anything new.

At the very least--*The Walking Dead* offers the promise of the continued adventure... sticking with the same characters for years reaching past what any zombie movie has been able to show thus far.

At the end of the day, though--I have no clue why it sells so well. Maybe my mom is buying all the copies.

11) In the last few years you've been working alongside majors like Image and Marvel nonchalantly shifting from comedy to horror, from super-heroes to "What if". In which context do you feel most at ease, and why?

I find it all equally difficult. Some days I'm in the mood to write *The Walking Dead* but *Ultimate X-Men* is due and so it's kinda hard to kick into super-hero gear but for the most part I'm able to avoid that. I like doing different types of things all the time--it keeps things fresh and keeps me from having ideas that are interchangeable between whatever I'm working on.

I'm never sitting around deciding if I should do something in *The Walking Dead* or save it for *Invincible*. Everything I work on is so different from each other it's easy to keep things separate and bounce from book to book.

So some days it's easier to do a light-hearted superhero book and some days it's easier to do a dark superhero book or a survival horror book, it really just depends on what kind of mood I'm in and luckily, I've got enough differing work to be able to work on something no matter what mood I'm in.

And that'll do it for this month. I promise to resume regular mail-answering duties next month. See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

I'm sure there's a ton of things I should probably be telling you about but there's a bunch of mail to answer since I ran that interview last issue instead of a letters column... so I gotta get caught up.

So let's dive in shall we?

Dear Mister Kirkman,

In issue 35, why is it the Asian guy who drives a car into a wall? Couldn't you have made the driver a white person? Why do you have to perpetuate the Asians-drive-badly stereotype?! Being a proud half-Asian, I'm somewhat offended. At LEAST half offended, to be sure!

For cryin' out loud, the Hispanic guy turns out to be a liar and a traitor? I can't BELIEVE you! Why couldn't he be a just, kind-hearted and honest friend? Your choices are getting worse and worse... And not only is the strong black female character, Michonne, raped and tortured--but she's also a schizophrenic?! You add even further insult upon injury, it's no wonder all these SINCERE and INTELLIGENT readers are dropping your book like a ruptured colostomy bag!

Also, why do you have so many white characters going through hell on earth, issue after issue? Do you hate white people, too? And those poor, poor zombies... EVERY issue, these helpless, hopeless beings are RE-KILLED left and right! Like the first time wasn't BAD enough! It's as if THEY DIDN'T MATTER TO YOU. Your offensiveness KNOWS NO BOUNDS, sir! Have you no cultural understanding or sympathy?

I implore you, please, stop this madness. For the sake of the few readers you have left.

Drew G.
Berkeley, CA

PS -- Last issue was great writing, like every other issue before it. Keep up the good work, man.

Excellent letter, young Drew.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Drew Gill, production artist at Image comics. Take a bow, Drew. Way to take something very not funny and make it very funny.

It's good to know I have at least one reader left.

Well, kids it looks like that'll do it for this issue's installment of "Letter Hacks." I really appreciate you buying this issue and I hope--what? There's more?

Damn.

ARGHHH!!!! I can't stand the suspense this comic is so good!!! Who's worried about zombies, it's your cliffhangers that are killing me!

I can't believe you: You left the Governor alive, overran the prison with zombies, didn't explain the helicopter, and set Woodbury only a few miles from the Prison? I love it! I hate waiting! What's gonna happen? 30 days is forever!!! (good job on the regular schedule!)

Well, we slipped again this ish--but seriously, this is the last time. Also, I DID explain the helicopter. The Governor mentioned where it was from in issue 28, I believe. They all kinda run together for me.

Here is what I want to have happen. I want ever escalating tribal battles! Rick's Tribe vrs the Governor's! I want to see Woodbury overrun by zombies when the Governor tries to take the prison. I want a long drawn out 3 way battle: Prison vs Woodbury vs Zombies. Then I want Rick to emerge as the leader of all the survivors. Then! I want Rick's Tribe to find/join a HUGE tribe. They work to clear the land of zombies, and succeed, things look good, then a giant swarm of migrating zombies sweeps in, hundreds die and it is utter terror!

Basically, I'm addicted to your writing and need you to take it up a notch so I can get the same high again. I've had to start buying Invincible & Antman. I just can't stand it. Could you get Bendis to let you write Ultimate Spiderman?

He's too senile to know when it's time to move on. I'm working on it, though.

Here's to sales doubling by Issue 50!
Mahdoo McCaleb

We can only hope...

Robert Kirkman,

I have been enjoying the "Walking Dead" comics for a few months now. The local comic shop owner not only knows my first name but loves me. I ran into WD on issue 32. Since I have bought everything from 1-34. The topic is great and could run mini stories for years.

The characters are very real... and sad. I mean, Donna. Clueless, bent and now dead. Rick was so.. clueless and weak in the first few issues. He has managed to grow up and get some hardness to him. All just in time to become crippled with the broken hand and then having the hand chopped off. I mean "GAHH".

All in all the people are believable. I think I can "understand" each of them. Yet some of them, like the governor, just don't make sense. Unless you're going for the extreme things do crazy things to people.

Everything other than feeding strangers to the zombies, I can see and almost expect. You have to have something to really toss the readers around. What happened in the office when Rick lost his hand... I can see it going down that way. I expected Mac to act like she did and Glenn to gasp in horror, just like he did. Question, why was Glenn pretty much just locked up and left alone in the town? Mac was abused, Rick was not only cut but interrogated... Humm... did they do something to Glenn that your not ready to tell us about?

I was just worried about Asian backlash... so I kept Glenn safe and sound in the room.

There are only 2 problems I think I should address. Sometimes Mac's sword looks like a short sword, sometimes a regular length katana and sometimes it looks like a full blown Tachi (big long sword katana, weighs more). What size is it and don't tell me short sword because I really doubt that, even if wielded by a trained fighter there is no way a short blade would chop a skull in half.

It's a katana. I can only imagine what you're seeing on the pages is foreshortening... and uh... forelongening.

Mac's next door kid.. the sword collector.. more than likely had a bunch of cheap junk swords to begin with. 90% of these would have bent or broken by now. But if he had ordered one from a traditional sword maker, then yeah, perfect Mac sword. Those happen to cost around 2 grand to start. Very possible the kid bought one of those and Mac happened to pick the good one out of the bunch. (My buddy ordered a "real" katana and it is sweet)

Michonne was a lawyer, I imagine she probably lived in a pretty nice neighborhood next to a rich family with a spoiled brat who got whatever he wanted.

But man, Mac is so bad news with the blade. She did not get that from fencing class! Not even Kendo in the US teaches the sword play that she uses. Maybe she could wing it using her fencing.

I imagine it is part fencing and part living on your own killing zombies nonstop for about six months.

I'm thinking either she is some sort of agent, trained martial artist or the slim chance that she watched a few good movies and sort of figured it out along the way. No matter what, she is messed up in the head.

Indeed.

We NEED some depth into Mac's past. Maybe reveal something to us. Bring Mac "in" more. Turn her from a strange, off minded, power character that is mysterious into someone that your readers might know in real life, that became a power player because of something.

Thought I did that?

Next, Why is it that the zombies just... appear... five feet away and jump on people? If anyone is half paying attention, they will clearly see the zombies coming, in the woods or not. Shoot, in the woods you would hear their foot steps in the leaves... It makes me think that the characters are not doing their job. Like the attack in the woods when the team is going back to the prison?? Just all of a sudden they are surrounded? If the zombies move 1/2 or 1/3 speed... that is.. very unlikely. Unless no one is paying attention.

Zombies move VERY slowly, so in order for them to be close enough to attack, they were probably already practically in their path, only moving a few feet to get to them.

Would that make noise? Six zombies moving ten or fifteen feet toward a human as it walked toward them? Sure. It'd make a bit of a rustling noise, branches moving, footsteps on leaves, etc. BUT... would it make as much noise as five people hustling through the woods? No. Rick, Glenn, Michonne, Alice and Martinez would have made so much noise moving through the woods, even if they were trying to be quiet, that they would have alerted the zombies to their arrival early enough for the zombies to be coming at them from their already-pretty-close-position and it would also muffle any noise the zombies would be making on their way.

So actually, the scene works just fine.

My favorite thing... It seems to me that people like to look through a door way, then turn their backs on it to have a spill of dialog then they have the look of surprise when they get jumped from behind... People.. HA! I think Donna and the Doctor deserved to die for doing that.

They probably did.

Wow long two questions. Can we have a real power player come along? Another Mac but perhaps before the war they were a soldier/karate guy? One that will tell you straight up that my sword style is this "fill in blank" or my style is my own blend of "fill in blank". Perhaps bend them some too. Give them a thirst to kill zombies. Maybe you will have someone to keep the outside of the prison cleared. :D

There are more new characters on the way, not too soon, but eventually. Don't worry.

Oh, and the prison problem... Go to the parking lot, get a SUV, gas it up... then lure the biters outside the gates (less clean up) then play "Crazy driver" where the point is to clip a biter and then back over them like squishey speed bumps. :D Secure the area and then clean house again. Find the family. Wait for the governor! by the way. The governor still has that one riot suit. :D

Sorry for the tangent... Keep up the work and keep them coming! And if you need help, you know where I'm at! :D

Don

If I get stumped, I'll give you a call. Thanks for writing.

"Hey--you're on time, great!"

Sigh. I regret that already.

But seriously, while nine issues in 2006 is below-par for a monthly book, at least you managed to get more issues out than Frank Miller and Jim Lee. Zing!

We also manage to get more issues out than almost ANY OTHER long-running independent comic. We're doing okay.

In response to Zach's letter in issue 34, if there's one thing this book can't be accused of, it's "losing it's unpredictability". After the traumatic events Rick and Michonne went through at Woodbury, I was waiting for the inevitable tearful reunion back at the prison... Wow! Suffice to say I was stunned with this issues cliffhanger and really hope you manage to get issue 35 on the stands as soon as possible.

I think we managed that--only to have a bit of a delay between 37 and this issue.

And while I'm talking about that final sequence, can I just applaud Charlie Adlard's art. I for one get bored of the constant "He's not Tony Moore" letters that get sent in, and feel Charlie's art is perfectly suited to this book. That splash page of the zombie-infested prison was awe-inspiring, and the second spread of cut-shots of the zombies roaming the prison walls really hammered home the situation.

Charlie is amazing.

Anyway, here's to getting half-a-dozen issues out in 2007!

We're shooting for 18.

Paul Shinn

PS. Oh and thanks for including the Image Holiday Special story in the back of the book. That was a welcome surprise. Nice to know your mindful of the readers that are picking up the single issues.

I try to be as accommodating as possible. I figure that things been out for a year or so, might as well share it in the book. And y'know... anything to have an excuse to write a shorter letters column. Sigh.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and the Gang.

Holy \$#%#@!!!

In my 29 years of life. I don't think anything printed has shocked me the way WD 34 did. After the intensity of the last issue, I kinda expected you to give us readers a chance to catch our breaths. But nope, you just couldn't.....You relentless bastard!!!! Thank You!!!

The 2 page spread of the prison filled with zombies....had me scooping my own brains off the floor....because my head was totally blown!!!!

Just a few statements

1. Thank You

2. Quality all ways exceeds quantity.....even if it was 4 or 5 issues in one year.....it would still be my favorite title. This is one really special book. I'd wait years for a new issue if I had to.

Thankfully you won't have to. We want to put the book out as much as possible too.

3. Have you tried out the audiobook for World War Z? It has a few great voices like Mark Hamill, Alan Alda, Henry Rollins and so forth. Worth checking out. And it's pretty cheap on iTunes.

I hear it cuts stuff from the book for length. I'd rather just read the book if I can find time.

Anyways.....awesome issue guys. Thanks for you time.

Duane Hand

Keep reading and we'll keep promising to ship issues on time only to slip a bit in the schedule time after time. EXCELSIOR!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome! God, you're so good at pulling people in and never letting go!!

Anyways, what kind of collection of comics do you own, personally? And also, do you follow any current series?

A big one. I have, well, about 20 long boxes of comics at this point, maybe more. I work in my basement, half of it is a studio and the other half is a comic book storage center. I have every comic book I've ever bought. Except for Sword of Azrael #1. I sold that when it was worth a bit of money so that I could buy the first Savage Dragon TPB. It had all kinds of new pages in it that I just had to have.

Right now I read Noble Causes, Dynamo 5, Godland, Savage Dragon (if it ever comes out), Astro City, Ex Machina, Y The Last Man, Astonishing X-Men, Ultimate Spider-Man, Ultimates, Daredevil, Criminal, PVP, Fell, Casanova, Jack Staff, She Hulk, Powers, New Avengers, Mighty Avengers, Captain America, 100 Bullets, All-Star Batman and Robin, All-Star Superman, I'd read anything written, drawn or both by Walt Simonson, Geoff Darrow, Bryan Lee O'Malley, Bob Fingerman, David Finch, Dale Keown, Olivier Colpel, Mike Wieringo, Cory Walker, Craig Thompson, Lienil Francis Yu, and any number of people who I can't seem to recall right now. I'm doing this off the top of my head. There's a ton of other stuff I'm sure I read that I'm forgetting. I get a lot of TPBs as well... and there's a lot of reading I do just to bone up on Marvel stuff for reference purposes.

Okay, one final question. What kind of music gets you pumped up to write TWD?

Awesomely sincere,
Will C.

Not really. I listen to music while I write but nothing specifically to get me into the mood for writing TWD. If I did it'd be Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds or The Dirty Three. That stuff gets me all mellow and relaxed and it's got a darker edge to it. But I usually just sit down and write, mostly while listening the The Presidents Of The United States Of America (best band since the Beatles--am I right?).

Whoa!! That book was awesome! I hope that was the last we'll see of the Mayor.. in 'Live form' anyway. -But there's one thing that bugs me, if everyone is already infected and you die from zombie bites. right? Michonne bites the mayor when they're wrestling or whatever and so im just wondering wheather he'd die from it and turn cannibal dead too.

No, a zombie bite kills you because it's a rotting, germ filled corpse breaking the skin and sending all kinds of nasty junk right into your blood stream. It gets you infected with all kinds of stuff and you die from the resulting illness. Then, because everyone is "infected" with whatever the zombie plague is... once you die, you come back as a zombie. A bite from a human wouldn't kill you any more than a bite usually would.

Heh. it'd be ironic if he was put in that fighting ring. Also, the last couple of issues had me really excited i even almost cried at the end of issue 34! I'm sure the others will be alright, right? RIGHT!? i hope Axel isn't dead. hehe. Also, im sure they can take the Prison back from the Axis Zombies. I've been jumping up and down laughing and smiling and going crazy over the story. It's awesome, though my mum thinks I've gone nuts.

I've also got a couple of questions;
1. Will you show us whatever happened in the prison? Like a flashback, it could be lame, we wouldn't want a GN version of Lost now. Oo Maybe even a totally different book, maybe you've already got it sorted and i'm just wasting your time.

There's really no need to see what happened in the prison. I'm trying to use flashbacks as sparingly as possible.

2. Carol is hot, can you give her, her own girlfriend? Maybe Alice? Whoo!

I'll see what I can do.

3. It'd be cool to see cameo's in TWD, do you think you'd ever put them in?
eg, in my comic book, i bring back he same zombie over and over again, (maybe Michonne recognises a little girl outside the prison -the same one from the mayors room) my friends think its stupid but still funny. I would tell you the title but i dont want to turn this letter into an advertisement! (Also im ametuer comic book writer)

No plans. Although there is ONE zombie who's appeared no less than three different times in the book. Look for him!

4. I notice that in most Zombie books, movies or Graphic Novels they never actually call them Zombies. They call them "monsters" or "things" but never Zombies. Do you know why that is?

Most of those movies don't take place in worlds where zombie movies don't exist. So the term zombie hasn't been appropriated for use the way it has here. The Walking Dead takes place in our world, as if this stuff had started happening in October 2003 and continued from there. Now, in the book it's still only like... June 2004 at this point (if you're keeping track), but these people would at least be aware of the existence of zombie movies. They don't really talk about it much... because that would be silly.

Also, 5. do you think you could get a character to (always) refer to them as Zombies?

There's been a few times... I don't think it's gotten to the point where the term is used exclusively. Maybe in time.

OK, so that's all I can think of right now, a bit lame, but I can't wait to see issue 35! Thanks heaps!

-Isaako

Thanks for reading!

Hey, what gives? I drool and wait for what seems like an eternity, and when issue #35 of TWD comes out...the last page is messed up...

And by messed up, I mean you reprinted the page where Tyreese apologizes to Rick. We love (or hate) the "surprise cliffhanger endings" at the end of each issue...and I was very upset to see that we were denied the "ending" of this issue.

(Especially since Tyreese was hinting that something was up since Martinez was "INSIDE for HOURS)

((By they way...did you see the way he looked at Andrea on Page # 7 ?...maybe that's what he was INSIDE...that would cause some drama))

Anyway, will you send me (us) a properly revised copy of the issue? Or will the last page be included in issue # 36? Or are we, the readers, S.O.L. ???

Inquiring minds want to know....thanks.
J.D.

When issue 35 was first printed, it was messed up, and it was my fault. I downloaded the proofs and didn't look at them right away. Image contacted me the next day to see if I had looked over the proofs and thinking back, I remembered downloading them, and I USUALLY look at the right away, so I figured I must have looked at them, and I didn't REMEMBER there being a problem... so I approved the book. So then, when the book came in and was fucked up (page 21 printed twice instead of 22) I couldn't really do anything. The printer wouldn't reprint if free of charge since it wasn't their fault. So I reprinted the issue on my dime, eating the cost of an entire separate print run.

I'm still kicking myself for doing that.

But we participate in a retailer first look program, where retailers get copies of book a week early so they can show customers and adjust orders if they think they need more copies. I thought it'd be neat to let some of the BAD copies leak out in that program. It's only 1500 copies or something. I figured they'd be collectors items, or a neat variant version for people to hunt down.

But I didn't exactly announce this, so maybe it wasn't the best idea.

Anyway, the vast majority of the print run 25,000 or so are completely fine. So you should have no trouble returning that copy to a retailer and getting a good one.

If you do have trouble, email me and I'll see about getting you a replacement copy (and they goes for anyone who accidentally got a messed up copy).

Hey Robert

I am a fan of your myriad of comics walking dead my favorite "comic in general". my wife and I read Walking Dead together "only comic she reads". I decided to write after reading all the letters about racism, which is bogus, I think you could be a little more sensitive to the letters you get but when I read the infamous rape comic nothing racial came to mind. When I first saw Caesar Martinez I was excited about a hispanic being a zombie survivor "my last name being Martinez" but I didn't cry racism when you made him a bad guy in issue 35. You are a white fellow you write what you know, I see all your characters as racial neutral, unlike other writers I have read like stephen king, where he writes about a 30+ year old black women with a southern accent in a number of his books. He will never know what it's like to be a black women of any age and him trying to write dialogue for them comes out racist. I like the way you write ethinc characters neutral as if they are white, because stereotypes don't belong in good writing. I want to read your story YOUR story, make these characters as real as possible but dont write silly accents or crazy fictional backgrounds for different ethic characters. Everything you have done so far in this book as been great and no racism or sexism. My wife and I will continue to read your comics (she is white by the way) as long as the series runs or you become boring. Your comic is gold.

-Martinez

I don't know if I'd say I write all my characters "white" just because I don't write slang. I appreciate the comments, though.

Also appreciate you not crying foul over the whole Martinez, Hispanic thing. I almost rewrote the whole story to not kill Martinez but in the end I decided to just stick with my guns. I think if you if you read 35 again you'll see he's not exactly a bad guy. If he was telling the truth, I think Rick is almost the bad guy in that situation. Martinez was just wanting to help his people... they were just people Rick didn't trust.

Kirkman,

I am a new convert to TWD. In fact I was not a comic book reader at all until I found out about TWD.

I love how you portray Glenn it the book. He is a well rounded character. It is a breath of fresh air to see an Asian character portrayed in a non-stereotype role. He is smart, interactive, industrious, and gets the girl.

Kent

It's letters like these that help me fight the urge for Glenn to break out into some karate whenever there's trouble. Thank God for these letters, people.

Mr. Kirkman,

Yesterday I read the most recent issue of "The Walking Dead" (#35) and wanted to write a quick note to let you know I was a little disappointed. Not in the story! That was great. I liked it very much. My mistake was continuing my reading once the story ended. The Letter's Column. Then, I became disappointed.

Normally, I will avoid the letters column of most "popular" books. The reason being; most of the letters within will fall into one of several categories:

1) Praise. These letters are fine. They let the artist know that they are not working in isolation and re-enforce their commitment to the book. In fact, these letters should be given to the artist(s) involved to spur them forward.

2) Analysis. Personally, I do not think that any intelligent, critical analysis should exist in the same pages of the publication that the analysis is being performed upon. In fact, I am not sure if an issue-by-issue analysis is even possible on an ongoing monthly. Possibly a body of work or a story arc could be subject of such a "discussion", but with the pacing of modern comics, I think the issue- by-issue analysis is limited at best and a wasted effort at worst. As an example, I offer the concept of the story pacing. In the infancy of comics, the dramatic backdrop was informed by books and short stories. Today? Maybe it's film. Your book is not

alone in the pacing style. Maybe everyone is using Final Draft to write their comics now - so the pacing is more cinematic. (at least it makes it easier to adapt to the screen later on - you clever, soon-to-be-rich guy!). The challenge is that trying to analyze the story as it unfolds is like trying to review a movie every 10 minutes. It makes no sense. The pacing of a story requires that you juggle many threads and then synthesize them in come clever way at the end (of an arc or the work). I'll wait for you to be interviews in the Comics Journal or some other publication - thanks.

3) Speculation. Okay - maybe this is really the same as #2 above. However, this particular form of analysis seeks to "figure out" what the artist is doing. I am not very fond of this type of speculation. To me, it seems as if the letter writer is trying to either win a fictitious contest with the artist to figure out what is going to happen before it is presented - or they are trying to "steal" the story and generate their own fictional premises upon it. Let them wait until the story is told before trying to pay it homage!

4) Criticism. This is the most evil of all the letter types. Critical feedback is important to help an artist grow. However, criticism while the work is being performed is dangerous. To my mind, if someone chooses to criticize a work in progress, what they are really trying to do is shape the artists performance to match their personal desires. It seems that your letters column has had some of this type of feedback in reference to the recent rape sequence. A rape of a human being. It seems that some folks with to politicize and/or attribute more to the scene than it may deserve. Personally, I found it disturbing. Thank god I did. Otherwise, I would quite the monster and de-humanized (something many violent comics can help me with should I choose). The fact that this scene was disturbing and was part of a larger story about the loss of control, fear, survival, and (hiding in there) - solidarity and hope - speaks to the fact that this work Isn't just some "zombie" book. The zombies are representative of something else. However, I digress into point #2 above here. Let's see you get a couple hundred issues done before we start deep analysis :) In reference to this particular sequence - it was not the colour of the skin, but the violence and violation that disturbs me - as it should. You are creating apocalyptic fiction. A genre in which the visual arts (comics and movies for example) tend to treat less than intelligently. Normally the script calls for "me...KILL....Yoooooooouuuuuu!" not for a deep conversation on loss and coping. Could you have handled this scene differently? Yes. Did you? No. I understand and respect that you told it the way you felt it should be told. See below.

So, why am I writing? Where does this little letter "fit" in my above world? It's a new category! Encouragement. It seems as if you have taken a few "hits" lately and I wanted you to know that the book is being appreciated by this one reader. Please remain true to your artistic vision and do not allow any feedback to shape the telling our YOUR story. I accept my role as the READER and encourage you to continue yours as the WRITER. With that agreement in place, I look forward to your story as it unfolds. There will be parts that will disturb, amuse, and inspire my faith in survival (or else I will silently stop buying the book). I will not attempt to tell you how or what to present. That is YOUR job and any attempt on my part to make you conform to my wishes seems insincere in the spirit of our Reader/Writer relationship. If worst came to worst and I was really concerned about it - I suppose I could write my own stories. Those, of course, would be perfect in every way and subject only to praise and acclaim! (haha).

So keep up the work. It can neither be said to be good or bad. It is yours to create and mine to consume as I see fit to spend my time and resources. So far - the value to me has been huge. I enjoy it.

Regards,
Frank

Thank you for writing and for the encouragement. As far as me taking a few hits in the letters column goes. It's not quite as bad as it reads. I print less than half of the mail this book receives, it gets quite a bit. So I pick and choose what to print. I could easily manipulate things and just print positive mail... then it would look like nobody had any problems with this book. But that makes for a really dull letters column and that's no good at all. So instead, I print the most interesting letters, the ones that will generate the best responses... and a lot of times--it's the negative mail that does that. So I usually print ALL the negative mail I get. So every single letter complaining about Michonne got printed, except for maybe a few, since they got a little repetitious after a while.

But if you read the letters column you'd think there was an overwhelming outcry for my head after that issue. There wasn't.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me kick things off with applause for your artists. Adlard and Rathburn have done an excellent job differentiating the characters through hairstyles, body types and clothing. Issue 35 in particular made everyone look distinct in almost every panel. I really appreciate that in a black and white comic book that for a while had everyone wearing the same uniform.

Well, that's a welcome change to the usual complaint.

Anyone calling what happened to Michonne a "rape fantasy" has too many suppressed fetishes to be casting aspersions at your book. It was horrible, disturbing, and unless they missed it, was avenged in a fashion more revolting than can be described in a single word. I'm a white male reader, and nothing about what happened to Michonne gave me even a fleeting sexual urge, let alone make me want to "whack off." If readers of any race think that subject material is arousing to the majority of Caucasians, they themselves have racist delusions they should deal with.

It may not help my judgment that Michonne is my favorite character in the book. You've managed to write an assertive, ass-kicking, foe-maiming female character who has never once gotten on my nerves. She's creeped me out, but that's another matter. I'm terribly interested to see what becomes of her "conversations." I almost called it her "eccentric behavior," but that describes almost everything she's done. How many characters debut using a pair of castrated zombies as veritable sled dogs?

Also, I've been pronouncing it me-SHONE in my head.

Close enough. Hell, you could be right.

Issue 35 had a real spark to it. I was struck by the great little moments you had in there. Like Rick's son figuring a zombie must have bitten his dad for his hand to be gone, with no one seeming to think that such a horrible thing was the result of human malice. Or like when Rick is alone with his wife and shushes her by placing the index finger of his one remaining hand on her lips. It's very clever stuff, but not full of itself. That's my favorite thing about your writing.

Here's my Comic Book Nerd Question: is the guy getting hit by the car on the top panel of the second page in issue 35 based on a real person? Given all the undead Charlie Adlard has to draw, I'm sure he's used at least a few real faces. This one seems a little conspicuous, though I can't put my finger on why.

As far as I know it isn't. Charlie doesn't do that very much as I recall.

Thank you for the excellent comics. You've quickly become one of my favorite writers. Period.

Cheers,
John W.

Thank you very much John Wayne... you quickly became one of my favorite letter writers... and actors.

Kirkman,

Thank you. Truly thank you, and not just for your wonderful book, but because of how you have affected people, myself included, with your stories. Notably the Woodbury arc of TWD has been the cause of some fascinating letters in your book. When I read other books letter pages it's always filled with people writing long winded paragraphs about how mad or upset they are about a costume change, or something equally inane. but your book, has people up in arms and discussing important issues such as rape, racism, and social classism These issues need to be addressed, and it is sometimes viewed as not polite to discuss these things in daily life, and so the problems and issues never get any serious thought, but you have given people an outlet, and promoted discussion and renewed passion in very real social problems. However unintentional they may be. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You. It's just good to see people really thinking and discussing things of actual importance.

Ok. now on to some nerd stuff.
1) Where can I get a subscription to the walking dead, so that I can have it show up at my house?

I believe www.mycomicshop.com offers subscription services... but I know there are a bunch out there.

Image Comics itself does not offer a subscription service.

2) What are some monthly books do you read currently?

I already went over this earlier in this very letters column.

3) Can this be published in issue 36? pretty please?

How about 38? Does that work?

Your Reader for life,
-Michael Kotlarek II

I'm going to hold you to that.

Dear Rob,

I don't know why I write you letters. You don't print them anymore.

Heh.

Walking Dead is an interesting character study at least, but--I just wish it was in color you know?! Maybe THEN I'd know who anyone was.

See, I hear this crap all the time. I swear it's not that hard if you just pay attention.

I didn't even really know till this issue's letter column what Rick's last name was: Grimes. I guess it fits, don't it?

Is that a problem? Do you have to know everyone's last name? Rick's was mentioned in issue 1, at least... I know that. I just don't think it's important for people to be running around saying their last names all the time.

For a black and white somewhat independent comic there's not much T & A involved here, huh?

Is that a problem?

I honestly think this book will burn out after not too much longer.

You opinion is duly noted. I'll do my best to prove you wrong.

And Again I ask you, Kirk: What about God? Why don't Rick and these others pray to God and, and ask him why he let this happen? Don't you believe in God, RK?

Hershel is the only character in the book that is devout. I believe Otis was shown praying, too. Hershel's doing to all the time, whether we show it or not. Personally, I'm an atheist... and I guess that might come through a bit in this book. I'll try to throw some God talk in there. It is an important part of American life that probably could stand to be represented a bit better... it'll just need to occur naturally, keep reading true believer!

I think I only even learned how a Zombie is made this issue too: by biting. Still, it wasn't so bad, though. I didn't have to skim-read it or anything.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Zombies aren't made by biting. What book are you reading?

Hi Robert

At the ripe old age of 24 I've been reading comics for just over half my life but have never once been compelled to actually write in and voice my opinion. Well clearly that's now changed; why? I guess I'm bored of reading foolish letters sent in by intellectual gnats with the audacity to accuse you of racism! It's completely ridiculous, the whole point of The Walking Dead is that f'd up things happen to these characters on a regular basis! It's not meant to be Sesame Street. What's more, it completely made sense that Michonne was the one to get raped. Which of the other women in that prison would have had the balls to volunteer to help find the helicopter? I can't think of any, and who else of those gals possessed the necessary strength of mind and psycho/demon streak to exact the horrible and brutal maiming the governor was deservedly subjected to? None! It had to be her! It's also obvious that was all done for a reason as she she clearly didn't kill the guy and he's no doubt gonna heading straight for the prison as we speak, pissed as is humanly possible, ready to bring down the war to end all wars on Rick and the gang and entertain the heck out of all of us for the next 4 issues. But, certain

people don't notice these things; all they notice is colour, they see something nasty happen to a non white character perpetrated by a white character and accuse you of deliberate design, what they don't realize is that by being so quick to notice the racial boundaries between the two characters in this situation they are actually inadvertently highlighting their own racial issues. You're not racist at all, in fact you couldn't be further from it. You're so distinctly un-racist that when you wrote that issue I doubt you even realized it was a black character being assaulted, to you it was just a character.

Kudos to you Mr Kirkman, I'll never be dropping your book.

P.S. I'm black.

Thanks for writing, sir. It is true that the characters for the most part are just words on a computer screen to me until they're drawn. So really, as I type them, really... ALL the characters are black. Race honestly never comes into my plots. I also maintain that the coolest characters in the book have been minorities.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'll be brief. "Walking Dead" is one of the best action/drama series I have ever read. This is coming from someone who has been reading comics for the better part of 40 years. I was wondering if you have ever approached or been approached by any of the Cable T.V. executives about turning TWD into either a live action or animated series on Cable (HBO, ect...)? I believe TWD has the type of drama you would find in a show like "Oz" or "The Sopranos". I think it has the staying power of those shows. Please look into it. Thanks much. Oh! And never stop writing TWD.

Ty Scott Evans

I agree, the book would make an excellent television show, but there's currently no plans on the horizon, sadly. But I promise, as soon as I have news to announce... you'll hear about it.

Mr. Kirkman

Several months ago I wrote in indicating that I was dropping the floppy issues and returning to the TPB editions. This due to the lateness of the monthly issues. By the way, thanks for printing that letter & better yet, explaining the situation.

Well, just as I was about to proceed with that plan, issue #33 came out. With all the buzz around that issue, I managed to get the last copy at my local comic store. Man, you are making it very difficult to proceed with my plan. Issues #33 and #34, were just incredible. I just had to purchase them. Now, issue #35 just came out. And yes, I picked that one up as well. Not as powerful as the two previous issues, but still worth it. I guess I'll just have to drop my plans and continue to pick up the monthly issues.

HA! I WIN! (not that I mind you just buying the TPBs... as long as you're reading really).

As for issue #35, just a few things I would like to point out that seemed rather odd. I found the issue very talky. There was a lot of action going on, but, somehow the visuals seemed to be lost behind the amount of word balloons. Perhaps it was just me, and the way I read it. Second, the clean up. I thought that would have been an entire issue right there. Follow the action as they attempt to secure the Prison again. I felt like the jump ahead was too big.

In my opinion, we'd already shown the clean up the prison twice, in issue 13 and again in issue 19. So I figured it'd be better to skip it.

Also, I believe in issue #34 you mentioned that you would be cutting back on the letter pages. I understand that. That thing must eat away at your time. Better to get those issues out on time than waste it answering letters. Issue #34 presented that short Walking Dead Christmas story which I had never read before. Issue #35 had something not related to Walking Dead to fill up the pages. Is it possible to get extra Walking Dead related material to fill up those pages. Pencilled pages, Character Index, script notes etc. I always loved the idea that the monthly issues were completely related to Walking Dead material.

Thanks, and keep up the great work.
AA

I like previewing other good books that I think people will enjoy. Also, doing a letters column is way faster than putting together any kind of TWD bonus material for the back. Also, there's really not a lot. I write the script and

Charlie draws the pages. Every now and then there's a cover sketch by either me or him... but there's not enough for even one page of sketches every issue. It's just not feasible. I am doing longer letters columns from time to time--like this issue.

Greetings Robert,
I'm writing in regards to the letter in issue #35 from "non racist black man" Charles L.. As a member of W.B.W.W.O.(White Boy's Who Whack Off), I must say he is 100% correct and accurate with his statement about a "great deal of white readers" whacking off to the rape of Michonne.

Lately at our W.B.W.W.O meetings(held every other Tuesdays in the local church basement) I have noticed an increase of Walking Dead #29 being used, where as previously we had used the newest issue of "Ebony Booty" or a DVD bootleg copy of Codename: The Cleaner to pleasure our whiteselves to happiness.

Let me finish by saying that even though I've been sexually active for over 15 years, your black and white comic has provided me with an experience that neither internet porn or my real life girlfriend could provide. I want to thank you for the most satisfying sex ever.

On a serious note, any chance of Tyreese getting raped? One of the members of G.W.B.W.W.O. wanted me to ask you.

Anyhow keep up the good work.
-John B.

I probably shouldn't have printed this... but what can I say. It made ME laugh.

Hello Robert,

How's it going?

I've read all of your comics up to issue #35, I'd like to start by saying that they're amazing and you're kind of my hero. I love your writing, and I plan on getting into a few of your other comics. Also, you're hilarious in your response columns I absolutely love your characters and their development. and i like to go over a few of my favourites and not so favourites.

1) Rick- is a badass, i love rick and i think he's the best. I'll admit that i was a little worried, and disappointed, when he lost his hand, both times, but it would appear that you're pulling it off. i was worried that he wouldn't be the same protagonist without his hand, will he stay the same headstrong protagonist that he is?

Only time will tell.

2) Tyreese- Close to being as badass as Rick. If he hadn't fooled around with michonne he might even be my favourite. is there a thing with him and her, like are they together?

Only time will tell.

3) Lori- Bitch. I hate her, she's done nothing but bring rick down from his potential. Is there anyway you could kill her after she has that baby, but preferably not even on panel. I don't think she even deserves an acknowledgement. Like Rick should come back one day, and be like "hey where's mom?" Carl Replies "Um... I think she got eaten..." Rick then replies "well, that sucks, wanna go outside and do something more interesting than talking about her?" Carl: "sure dad"

Only time will tell.

4) Carl-If Rick does stop being the protagonist, it shouldn't be until carl is at least a teenager, and then you should make him a killing machine...

Only time will tell.

5) Martinez- If he is telling the psychos at woodbury about the prison, kill him, if not... then i like him...

Only time will... sigh.

Also, is there anyway we'll see some zombie dogs or other animals?

Anyway, thanks for reading, and if you don't, then thanks for writing the amazing comics.

Madok

No zombie animals. Don't these characters have enough to deal with?

Dude!

I don't have a good nickname to issue you, but if that was the zombie-you getting run over by Glenn's car in issue 35 then maybe it should be RK for roadkill. Actually on third and fourth glance that reminds me more of Tony Moore. It's only right that you should get a zombie-cameo in your own book. Maybe I should have been paying better attention all along. I'm always on the lookout for celebrity-zombies.

Anyway, I'm the guy that wrote an overly fan-boy letter about 6 months back saying how it was coincidental that whats-her-name was reading Moby Dick in the prison cuz I just happened to be reading Moby Dick... I'd just like to say that 8 months later I've finally finished that book, and it was great. Although, you could take out about half the chapters and it would still be great.

I'll read it one of these days. I'm really not all that well-read. I'm ashamed.

I'm writing now because I believe your book, as a work of art, should not be censored by anyone's sensibilities but those of yourself and Charlie, and that goes for your lettercol too. I enjoy the letters column because it's a true living dialogue between yourself and your audience unlike any other artistic medium. In responding to criticism of Michonne's rape (or portrayal thereof) you said "Am I just digging myself a deeper hole by printing the letters dealing with this stuff? I can't even tell any more." I hear ya, man, but standing up to the harshest criticism for a book you believe in is about the best thing you can do. We're all along for the ride.

I hope it was at least entertaining.

With that, I'd just like to add that your single-issue tempo as well as the tempo of the arcs has always been dead-on. Shipping tempo, too... I'll wait on quality any day. From the sound of it issue 36 might show up this week or next... cheers to that!

- Brian Hans

p.s. Cliff's back covers make a strong case for clear backing boards!

They certainly do. Cliff is the man!!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I would like to start my letter by saying that you are a bad bad man...and you're sneaky...And you're just a mean fucker. My heart sank. I jumped up and screamed out. I shouted out curses of denial. I shook my fist at the universe and screamed my NO to an uncaring sky. It was at that moment of abject horror that I realized YOU were the source of my dismay and fear and terror...

...and for THAT I would like to thank you.

The ending to issue #34 was the best shocker I've had in awhile. I totally didn't see it coming. By now I've picked up issue #35 and I know how that turns out, but still. I hope this book lasts forever! ...or at least as long as you are willing and interested in writing it. I've been following since issue #7 and have eagerly awaited each new chapter. You've got me by the nose Mr. Kirkman, lead on!

I would also like to note that since you seem to have ignited a zombie craze in comics again (I do credit YOU with that → What books were out there before THE WALKING DEAD?!? Hunh?!? Who paved the road Beeyatches?!?) I've picked up a few of the other books that have come out along the way and have been disappointed each time...because they just don't get it.

It is obvious that the work is being done for the buck and nothing more.

Anyway...I just want to thank you for getting it.

Thank You.
Jesse W. Campbell

Well, I guess I can say, your welcome. But seriously, thanks for reading the book. I really do put a lot into this title and I'm glad you're digging it. It's good to hear this stuff from time to time. If you want to read good zombie books that I think are on-par with The Walking Dead, check out REMAINS, that's a good one. And I think WASTELAND is really good, I hear a lot of good

stuff, I just bought the TPB but haven't been able to read it yet. (I don't believe it actually has zombies in it, though).

Yo, Kirkman

This is my first time ever writing into a comic book writer. Congratulations! Honestly, though, I couldn't be happier to have this be the first I write in to a book, seeing as how The Walking Dead is the best book on the shelves, bar none.

However, something in the letters section in issue #35 bothered me, and I'm sure you can guess what it is. Charles L. wrote in about the issue in which Michonne is raped by Phillip. To be honest, I don't agree with him at all, but I had no problem respecting his point of view on the situation, until he reached that utterly ridiculous line that you later addressed.

I just want to point out that I've printed every letter this issue that pertained to the Michonne rape. I wasn't going to print any more complaints about that issue simply because I felt the issue had passed--but I didn't have to cut any out because I wasn't sent any. Every letter that mentioned it is suddenly on my side. Maybe those other folks really DID stop reading.

Robert, I've done some crazy stuff in my time, and I love Cliff's work, but I can assure you that I have not once even contemplated "whacking off" to an issue of The Walking Dead. What Charles insinuated about an entire race of people is blatantly hypocritical. He wants us to believe that as a writer, you're racist against anyone that isn't of caucasian descent, yet essentially proclaims in the same paragraph that we whites are a bunch of degenerate, racist, sex fiends that literally get off on the sight of black people being violated in any sense of the word. Someone should explain to me how that isn't a beautiful example of the pot calling the kettle black.

Your response to Daniel's letter, in the same issue, was the exact point that needs to be remembered. A LOT of bad things happen to A LOT of people. If you readers want to play the race card, why don't you check out what's happened to caucasian people in this book? I don't see people writing in every month, freaking out about another white person being murdered, dismembered, or portrayed as a bumbling idiot. Not to mention, Michonne went absolutely medieval on Phillip, and I see no complaints about that (in fact, I applauded the entire issue, and consider it one of my favorites).

Take it all in stride, Robert. You are one of the few brilliant writers left out there, and for every oversensitive person you piss off through the story you're trying to tell, you'll capture ten new readers that are blown away by the depth of emotion and storytelling that your book presents. Thanks, and please, don't change this book for anyone.

- Matt J.

And with that we bring another letters column to a close.

I'll see you back here in two weeks (for real this time) for issue 39 and then from here on out we're monthly or better.

PROMISE.

See you soon.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

So, holy crap—I can't believe we're already on issue 39. I feel like we're just getting started, too... even though this series has already outlasted a good number of creator-owned series.

I mean, I think about who there are more issues of this series out there than things like HELLBOY and PLANETARY and I'm shocked. I mean, not that I think we're even remotely on-par with those great series, but it seems like those books have been around forever... and they have. It doesn't seem right that we should have more issues out than them.

And yet you jerks still complain about the shipping schedule. (smiley face)

Honestly, I am flattered more than anything by the complaints of our shipping schedule. I take it to mean you guys really dig the books and that means a lot to me.

Hopefully this issue shipped closely behind issue 38 so you'll see that we are getting closer and closer to on-time. Regardless, we do at least come out regularly, if we don't always (or often) hit our ship dates. You gotta at least give us that.

But enough scheduling talk.

Sales numbers are still going up on the series. The book broke into the top 100 comics for the first time last month and the market is much stronger these days than it has been in years past. Meaning, it takes more to crack the top 100 than it did a few years ago. I don't often talk about numbers these days, but I just wanted to let the people who are committed for the long haul on the series to know that we're still trucking along with no end in sight.

So that's good right?

But enough numbers talk... let's answer some mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman:

First off, and I know you get this a lot, but yet another zombie-obsessed chick wants to tell you, you're doing a kick-ass job here. WD stands up to repeat readings, my lit-crit pretensions, and years of systematic study in the ways of the zombie. My college is offering a course in graphic novels currently (which, of course, I'm taking), and just so you know, I find your work compelling and quality enough that I'm actually giving my presentation on Marvel Zombies and writing a research paper about the Walking Dead. Because seriously, you rock.

And I know that you didn't do it for approval and that you don't need some stranger cheering you on, but I feel compelled to do it anyway, regarding:

When did I ever state I didn't do this for approval? Carry on.

In issue 32 (yes, I'm behind that much), Sundjata Abubakari wrote in to take you to task for portraying the rape of a black woman by a white man. You clearly stated that you hoped that if the reader was this upset about this rape, that he or she would also be upset about the rapes and bad things that happened to other characters, regardless of race or gender, and that you were looking at it as "what's best for the story". I just want to say: You go, Mr. Kirkman! People gave Alice Walker a lot of shit about writing The Color Purple, too (the portrayal of black men as violent; I believe that was the problem), but when I read The Color Purple, it literally changed my life, as cliched as that is. I think that the rape of Michonne doesn't actually encourage race and gender inequality: by showing it in such harsh, ugly, brutal, disgusting light, you make it thought provoking, not titillating. The intent was very obviously to make us hate the governor, to make us wonder about how a society is formed in the midst of lawless chaos, to make us THINK about how far people are willing to go to feel safe (as in the townspeople), and what kinds of things we want to just not think about, but which we are willing to allow as long as it keeps us in Pringles and Saturday night tv. In fact, that Michonne is a black woman being raped by a white man makes this a stronger indictment of Western history, in that yes, this is exactly one way in which white male capitalist pseudo-Christian hegemony was established. Ok, maybe I'm reading more into it than you intended, but that's what I get out of it. The governor gives the people their bread and circuses, and in return they turn a blind eye to his evil.

And by the way: as a woman who has been sexually abused, I have to say that while the scene was horrifying, disgusting, and upsetting, the fact that Michonne never begs, or cowers, or submits--well, all I can say is, she's an inspiration to me. It makes me wonder what the hell she's been through before to be so strong, but regardless, her strength is amazing, and although this may be a cliché, through vicarious living, her strength gives me strength. I don't see this event as dehumanizing her, or breaking her, even though that was obviously the governor's intent in doing it. Rather, the fact that she retains her dignity, that she is HER OWN PERSON, belonging to no one else no matter what is done to her, only makes her character stronger. And honestly, I think that's what bothers the governor the most about her, he knows that no matter what he does to her, he CAN'T break her. Crack, yes, but shatter? No.

So anyway, I just wanted to thank you for standing up for writer's rights, for

portraying what you felt had to be portrayed at the time, for portraying a woman who goes through what most people think is the worst thing that can happen to a female and who comes through on the other side of it more bitter, maybe, but ultimately, unwilling to submit, unwilling to let them shatter her, and unwilling to let what some psycho does to her rule the rest of her existence. Even if she winds up breaking down a little later (which wouldn't surprise me), the fact that she can keep her shit together long enough to survive, and that she can even be humane enough (even after her experience) to cry over her actions when she takes her vengeance in the infamous issue 33, is what will stick with me.

Sarasvati

Thank you for writing in. You've provided valuable perspective on the topic at hand. I appreciate it.

p.s. -- I know this is totally off topic, but also in a letter in issue 32, you said that you usually prefer serious zombie art. However, I've gotten my greedy little paws on "Marvel Zombies" recently and laughed all the way through (esp. at the parodic treatment of Spidey and his 'sensitive nature'; the character based humor is great here--or maybe I just took it all the wrong way.) Was there something that they allowed you to do with zombie humor here that you don't usually see in humorous zombie art? And another question, is this where you put some of the ideas you didn't feel were appropriate for WD, or were the two pretty much unrelated? Does the use of color in Marvel Zombies make it more open to humor than WD, in your opinion?

As a reader, I'd probably rather read The Walking Dead than Marvel Zombies. I just prefer things more serious in zombie fiction. I like Day Of the Dead better than Return of the Living Dead. I like Return a lot--I just prefer Day. As a writer, it was great fun to cut loose and just do whatever came to mind in the zombie situation without having to worry about it being realistic. So while it's not the tone I prefer to read--writing Marvel Zombies was a hoot and a half. Although, I don't think I used anything I wouldn't have done (if I could) in The Walking Dead... it was all made up just for that series.

p.s.s.: zombie honeymoon. GREAT film. If you haven't seen it, you really should. It's heart wrenching, tho.

Hmm. Never even heard of it. I'll have to look it up. Thanks!

Mr. Kirkman:

I know that the subject matter of this email is very tired by now; I don't have too much to say though.

I was more shocked by some of the letters recently than the pages of the comic itself. I'm not going to read them again in order to quote anything specific. I already wish I had never read them.

Please don't start censoring your material. I absolutely love this book and I don't want to see it get watered down. I know you stated that this wouldn't happen, but the seed was planted in my brain. I need some reassurance or I will start second-guessing the intent of the story. This would ruin it for me.

Please don't start censoring your material.

Thanks for listening.
Andrew.

Yeah, no worries there, Andrew. Anything I do in this book is something I want to do, pure and simple, for the sake of the story or the characters. I don't second guess myself and I won't be changing my story for fear of backlash.

Case in point, the character Martinez. The guy from Woodbury who was murdered by Rick for attempting to report the whereabouts of the prison. He was the first Hispanic character introduced in the book (and won't be the last) and I never really took that into consideration. When I decided Rick would murder him, I realized I might get some backlash for killing my only Hispanic character. I even briefly considered changing the story--but in the end I stuck to my guns and went with the plan.

As I recall, I've gotten a few complaints but nothing major.

I know Martinez wasn't killed for being Hispanic, and I believe most every sane reader will know that's the case as well, so I'm not planning on making it a habit of playing to the small group of vocal crazy people who read far too much into this work.

Hey Mr Kirkman,

Been a long time reader of your comic and this is LITERALLY the first time I have written to a letter column (I never sent a letter overseas and I've only just got the internet - really! Check ME out!). Over the last few issues you have

been subjected to so much regarding the Michonne situation I felt compelled to write.

Is this how it's going to be for the next few months? Sigh. I'm sick of this already...

I am white (actually more a hot pink) [whoa--really?] and have spent the last 29 years living in a neighbourhood that is entirely racist. Almost the whole city in fact. I have tried every day to discourage this quality in others. I was forced to leave my last job when I reported the racists in my department and watched the situation disappear before my eyes. I have no doubt this is an ugly world.

My eldest daughter - my angel - recently used a racist term and I yelled till my hot pink face turned dark red and blue. She cried and said she never knew it was a bad word. I feel it is important for us as a planet to challenge ideas and promote growth through the use of them. I feel we should teach our children even the bad words. I feel we shouldn't sugar coat reality - the destruction we feel when life doesn't have that happy ending Uncle Walt promised us.

So far The Walking Dead has done this brilliantly. None more so in the case of Michonne. I felt sick at the brutal imagery I hadn't even witnessed and I felt shock at the chopping of Rick's hand. Both things hit me like a sucker punch. Not once did race play a hand. Bad stuff has happened to every character and I would like to think that if the apocalypse did come and the dead walked maybe Race wouldn't play a hand too.

Every artist has suffered a form of persecution for what they believed was right. Maybe this backlash against you is yours. I for one will never leave this comic. It has given me more than the cover price is worth. I feel sad for the one's that jumped off cause the best is yet to come.

Just NO Zombie babies okay?

Cheers bud - Ian

No zombie babies... gotcha. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to hit Wikipedia to find out which race has hot pink skin... this I gotta know.

First off, I want to thank you for publishing my first letter in #28. It was a great honor, and your book continues to bring me great reading pleasure every month... or at least it did. The book itself never disappoints, but the letters column has started to sink to a level that reflects an unfortunate truth on our society. I am speaking, of course, of the Michonne rape fiasco that has started to run rampant.

Here we go again...

Some statements in this letter are controversial and may bring a rain of fire down upon me, and if you decide not to print my letter to avoid that (or at the very least just to put the issue to rest once and for all), then I do not blame you. This letter could go on forever if I delve into my sordid family history and the history of this country in general, but I will refrain from going that deep. Nevertheless I doubt I can avoid the length of an essay, but I hope that you will read it and even consider publishing it. Better the rain to fall on me than you, and I feel the need to stand up today as a human being, not just a white man, against the injustices of the world as a whole instead of focusing on just one fictitious black woman and to call this entire argument into question for what it is.

That would begin by responding to Sundjata Abubakari and Charles L.'s letters with a statement you did not offer in your own: Charles and Sundjata are racists. Charles' statement claiming that several of your white readers pleased themselves to the scene of her rape was (I have no better word to use than your own) ABSURD, and such an effort to "get you to understand" the plight of black society does not help his cause one bit. I can offer one statement that could more easily be held as truth, however: with the state of mind in this country at present, the likelihood of that happening would be much higher if Michonne were of Middle Eastern descent.

Yow—what?! That letter just took a bit of a turn. I mean, are you so pessimistic in your view of the people of this country that you think anyone would derive that form of pleasure from watching the torture of another human being? I mean, I know the world has its sickos who would—but they're few and far between. Anyway... carry on... but WOW.

Yes, that was a disturbing idea, but I am more inclined to believe in the possibility of that than of the "honest truth" Charles proposed to all of us. I will happily buy an extra copy of The Walking Dead every month from this point to fill the gap he left because he didn't belong here, but then I suppose it makes me a racist to say that because I am white, doesn't it? I find it extremely odd that white people are the only ones who are called on being racist, and I am tired of being afraid of being branded as one for calling every black person's skin color references and preferences into question.

As you said, Mr. Kirkman, allowing this country's past to dictate your storylines is ridiculous, and it is even more ridiculous to cleanse the pages of this book of different skin colors. When Michonne was brutalized, her skin color never entered my mind. What I saw was a heroic and strong woman who was given what I consider the most horrible and cruel treatment that anyone in this entire book has received thus far (even her revenge on her captor, which made me cringe, did not come close). Nothing disgusts me more than what was done to her, but I saw her hold on. I saw the look in her eyes that told everyone that she was going to survive all this and make her abusers pay for their crimes. I looked at her, battered and bloody, and my heart jumped just imagining the horror of her experiences. Still, she gave me hope because she did not break.

If there is one thing that anyone needs to hear more than anything, then it is this: THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW. We stand in the present unwilling to brighten our future because we are too unwilling to accept what is past and move forward. Racism will never die because of people like Charles L. who will say anything, no matter how disturbing it is or how high-pitched it screams out as racist propaganda to prove a point. In other words, racism will never die because white people are not the only racists in this world, even though white people seem to be the only ones being forced to accept our racism as the truth.

I could stand here and lie to you, saying that I don't have a racist bone in my body, and as much as I would love to blame society for my racism, I have to accept that it is in my soul. Nevertheless, and I make no joke about this, I am an equal opportunity racist. I am only racist toward people who are racist toward me, and although that statement may not help my credibility, I remain a person who wishes for peace and sees all of the people of the world as equals despite the fact that some of them will refuse to see me the same way even after their dying breath. I don't see anything done by any skin color that offends me more than the behavior of white people. What's more, I believe in the biology of skin and that we all look the same underneath. I believe in the science that says that the only

reason we have different skin colors is because our ancestors had different adaptations to nature to help them produce Vitamin D. In other words, we are all the same, but none of us would be here if our ancestors had not been segregated in a purely visual sense in order to survive in their environment.

I take that even further: if all the black residents of northern cities like Detroit stay where they are, and all white people like me stay to the south where we are, then in about ten generations (even without any interracial marriages), our skin colors will start to lighten or darken, respectively. I would propose that idea to all of this letter's readers because our migration and constant movement around the world may very well make race a moot point a thousand thousand years down the line. Imagine your descendants laughing and looking at history books about today in complete and utter confusion because of things like the nonsense being argued here, or is it even possible for you to imagine it?

I wasn't going to print this until I got to the part about people reading The Walking Dead a thousand thousand years from now. You really think we've got that much staying power? Thanks man!

Rick (among my personal heroes, a man whose words are guided by none other than Robert Kirkman himself) couldn't have put it better to nurse Alice when he said that people in the world are so often focused on their own problems that they pay no attention to the world around them. There are few greater truths - and greater shames - in the world than that, and I accuse all of you of that as I accept it upon my own shoulders. How dare you, Charles and everyone else who complained no matter who your ancestors were, for reducing Michonne to the color of her skin and using her for your own agenda! The Governor committed an atrocious and deplorable act against her, but Sundjata was wrong. The Governor did not strip her of her strength and her resolve. The witnesses to her abuse did. I mean all of us: those who identified with her, those who spoke up about it, those who truly showed their humanity - a word too often left alone or wrongly defined in arguments of race - by being affected by it in the first place. I would go so far as to call each and every one of you a coward for leaving this book just because one story disturbs you, and I offer Sundjata a long and hearty "bullshit" to his statement that no other major white female character has been dehumanized in the same way followed by a heavy dose of "lighten the hell up." He mentioned Wonder Woman, and I found it odd that he made no mention of her creator Charles Moulton, a polygamist with a bondage fetish that showed up in many dehumanizing undertones of Wonder Woman's earliest stories.

To sum up, I think it borders on mental illness for anyone who is not disturbed by EVERY EVENT IN THIS ENTIRE SERIES, and you have no way of knowing how much validity there is to your feelings about stories such as these if you do not stick around to see the end result, especially if you feel the need to put a label on every single thing you see. Extending that thought, I call the label of this book as "entertainment" into question. I think the argument Michonne's rape brought up proves this book to be an allegory, a window into which we look for guidance rather than entertainment despite its often violent and depressing contents. In this world we see before us, Rick, Michonne and all the people in it are trying just as hard to hold on to their humanity as their lives, and they are questioning what the word humanity really means in the wake of this global disaster.

The people who have complained say that Michonne was stripped of her humanity, but I still see her holding on. She has remorse for her act of revenge, and if showing that level of humanity toward a cruel and evil man who gave his own up long ago, then I guess I don't know what humanity is either. On that note, I take back what I said about Charles leaving. He does belong here with us more than he knows, and I urge him and everyone else who left to reconsider and look deep within themselves for the reason why. I truly hope that someday we can all put racism to rest, and what better place to start than right here?

Sincerely,
Aaron Conway

I'm glad you never got back to that middle-eastern thing. You almost lost me with that. Thanks for writing Aaron. In rebuttal to your stance on non-white racism, I will say that I have experienced a fair bit of racism in my day being from the south and all, but I've never really had any that I could tell, directed at me. So while I admit that other races are more than capable of racism, I don't know how much of an issue it actually is.

Kirkman,

Just a quickie to say that Glenn digging through the bodies for an engagement ring was, somehow, one of the most heart-warming moments I've seen in comics in years. Well done for making what should have been weird and icky, um, not.

-Kelvin Green

Thanks!

OMFG,

For probably the 1st time in my life, My big-ass mouth is speechless. Let me back up just abit. Mr. Bendis and yourself have in my humble opinion the only two letters pages worth reading in modern comics. So there I was.....Indulging in Issue #35 of the Walking Dead's fan correspondence. My fingers running through the lines of prose, lips mumbling with the words, Hanging on every syllable..... and then.... My eyes stumbled.....I scanned back for a look. What could my skimming eyes might have tripped over?!? Allow me to recap. A Mr. Charles L., in reference to Michonne's vicious rape, stated and I quote. "If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue". I'm gonna throw a bit of truth atcha Robert, truth Ross-style. The truth is I am downright humiliated to have even read the rantings of such unstable thoughts. You know what I'm talking about, that embarrassment you feel for another human being when they clearly lack the common sense to be ashamed of themselves. I feel that now, Strongly. I got two words for Charles L. Are ya ready for 'em? Here they are Therapy & Lithium, enjoy.

Yeah, I probably shouldn't have printed that letter.

As for you Robert, you may not remember but we've met a coupla time @ San Diego. I've said it before, here it is again, Screw the haters. You, sir are doing a fantastic job, Take a bow. So this jerk-off Isn't buying TWD anymore, no worries, I'm buying two copies from now on. It's worth it.

Your Fan,
Ross Parr

Wow, I should thank Charles L. If every reader who read his letter starts buying two copies to make up for the one he's not buying... my sales will go up by another... thirty or so copies! Yay!

P.S, y’know something Charles L. I’m thinking you must be a racist to think up such crap, because “the honest truth” as you you like to say is, I NEVER would’ve come anywhere near your conclusions if you’re hateful thinking hadn’t lit the path. Charles, you, sir are an ass.

Well, there’s that. I’d like to invite Charles L to write in again and explain myself. It’s clear now that I’m not the only one who thought he was a bit off base and frankly, disturbed.

Hey,
A while back you had a back cover on an issue with a zombie that looked like it had been curb-stomped. It was absolutly GOREgous. I was wondering who did it? I was an issue a little past 30 I think.

All the back covers except for one have been completely done by Cliff Rathburn. Ryan Ottley, of Invincible fame, penciled one of them (and that may be the one you’re talking about. He wasn’t credited (because I suck) but it was signed “R.Ott!” on the art.

Also, Is Rick ever going back for Duane and his old man or what?

Only time will tell.

Is Glen ever going to get his balls back from his gal?

We’ll see.

Is Martinez a psycho or a double agent or is Rick just overly paranoid?

All of the above? Except for Martinez being a psycho... he was actually a fairly nice guy—aside from the whole double-crossing angle.

I think he really poured his heart out to the group back in the forrest, and i don’t think he could ever betray them, but then again... Kirkman has been taking lessons form M. Night Shyamalon... What a TWIST!

Will Rick ever get a bad ass robot hand or something or will he be a weak ass cripple forever?

We’ll see.

Who is Michonne’s other persnality! I think it’s her dead zombie boyfriend or his buddy, but then again, she’s a crazy bitch!

Who said there was only one other personality?

What about Rick/Shane’s love child? Will we ever know who the baby-daddy? And is anyone worried about that anymore, in the comic or in the real world? I’m not so worried about it being a zombie, since that nurse from the town said the baby had a good heart-rate and generally zombies are flat-lining. Unless they’re EVOLVING!

You know what happened with the baby by now.

Speaking of that, will they ever evolve? Smarter faster, stronger?

No plans for now.

It seems ever since they got to the prison everyone’s been on a perpetual menstrual cycle. Glenn, the Asian bad-ass Atlanta raider started crying, Rick was broke handed and now no handed, and he’s letting his handicap make him weak, Hersel is an old man! Tryreese and Rick turned into a couple of catty girls, i’m surpised they haven’t started pulling hair! And what about Carl and Sophie, were’t they hanging out. I like the idea of society rebuilding in this new world.

And Finally the Most important question of ALL! Where the HELL is Chuck Norris! There’s no way that Walker-Freakin-Texas--Ranger died in some silly ass apocalypse! Chuck Norns should have bitch-slapped Glenn for crying and then save them all, exept Hershal, skrew Hershal, old people don’t get to live when zombies are about.

Love,
TheWordSayer

I’ll work on the whole Chuck Norris thing. I’m sure that’d please a lot of fans of this book.

Hrg,

Just finished TWD #36. Rick’s silhouetted nub is rad. The recent debates in Letter Hacks have been great too. One guy gives up becuz TWD is not “congruent” with his “ethical views.” Another accuses you of lazily writing “voyeunstic torture porn,” and another flat out calls you ugly! Brian Schiavo accuses you of “crossing the line” and “pandering;” he even goes so far as to say you drift off to sleep with thoughts of sweet sweet torture!

Jesus Christ. I don’t understand being shocked enough to want to stop reading when something horrible happens in a horror comic. For that matter, I don’t understand being that upset about anything fictional -- especially fiction that they all say they’ve enjoyed otherwise. Your response to Schiavo’s e-mail, about seeing the good guy do the bad thing, was a nice insight. I hadn’t thought of that when I was jacking off to the old ultra-violence as I read #33. Just kidding.

No you’re not.

But it seems a lot of these people who are so offended by recent (fictional) events in this here funny book are just being self-righteous d-bags looking for excuses to write indignant e-mails. I say, get yr sexy torture on. It’s gratuitous, it’s horrifying, it’s thought-provoking -- and it’s total art.

Rev. Potere O. Occulto III

Well, I’d like to go on record now as saying that Charlie Adlard received a script that said, and I quote “Bad things happen to Rick Glenn and Michonne” and that was it. The rest was all him... it was all Charlie, I swear! So let’s start directing whatever hate mail is left to the man responsible. I just wanted Michonne to stub her toe or something.

Hi Robert !

1st - I am a French-Canadian. Though i speak english, i hope it will be readable...

I’ll give it a shot.

2nd - I really hope that you will publish me this time, because i have a lot to say and i’m sure lots of people will agree. What i will say will not be easy ... But i assume FULL RESPONSIBILITY of this letter.

Oh, no... not AGAIN.

It’s the 4th time i write to you. Most of the times i wrote was to kiss your ass to say how good you are and all TWD team. I still say (again) that i am a huge fan since the early issues (the Tony Moore era) and i have everything linked to TWD. I still wait for a Shane Bobble Head, Michonne Sword Replica, TWD Limited Edition HC with one of Rick’s Finger (only five available !). That comics bringed me back to the Comic world ... Especially the Zombie ones.

You are Great - Good - Beautiful - Smells Good - Funny - and Bla Bla Bla ...

OK !!! Enough Shit !!!

The reason i am writing this time, is to say how disgusting are those persons that yell about all the things that hurts ’em in this book. There is only one thing to say about that : Get Over It ! ... Why ? Because ...

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

Do you get it ???

Michonne being raped ... Michonne torturing the Governor ... Tyreese cheating on Carol ... All the dead . .

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

I am seriously worried about what’s going on in the world these days ... And TWD is FAR from being part of my fears. And that’s because everything is a matter of different point of views. Where some sees it as a racist act (the whole Michonne thing being raped by a white man, etc ...) i see it as character devloping, story ...

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

If you think it was sadistic what she done ... Watch any REAL horror movies and you will see what it is. Anyone who saw Romero’s Dead Series, Cannibal Holocaust, Fulci’s movies, Hostel or any other type of movies that are NOT kind of Modern Hollywood Teenage Serial Killers (Scream, Last Summer, Etc ...) will know what i am talking about. Those are MOVIES !!! And this ...

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

Now, sorry but i will hit it hard now ... If you keep reading this letter ...i warned you ...

What is worst ? Michonne payback the way we would all do if someone does that to us ? The “Supposed Racial” crime Kirkman is accused of because the character (who is randomly a black woman) is being raped by a Evil (White) Character ? The gore portrayed to match the horror of a HORRIBLE but FICTIONAL story ?

If you think it’s the worst and left the comic book for that ...

WHY WHERE YOU STILL THERE AFTER THE MURDER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS BY THOMAS ??? WHY ??? IT DIDN’T AFFECTED YOU ???

What is worst ??? Racial-Never-Ending-War-Since-Dawn-Of-Time ? Or the chop-off the head of two little girls ? If the image of two severed INNOCENT little girls didn’t offend you to the point of leaving the book. But the payback of an evil character that everyone hale, haunted your life did it ... That make you a FUCKING SICK UN-MORAL-SELFISH-SHIT-HEAD !!! But you know what ? It doesn’t matters !!! Because ...

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK!!!

Take it for what it is ! It’s NOT to trivialize the social issues here ... It’s just that anyone can see what they want where they want ! You can brag about how affected morally you were by some images or story lines, but some other don’t care because they KNOW that . .

IT’S JUST A FUCKING COMIC BOOK !!!

One last advise if other ones planned to leave this book ... Don’t read the Smurfs ! It can shock you to see that Smurfette is a metaphore to Gangbang fantasies (one smurfette, more than a hundred smurfs ... WoW !!!) ... Come on ! Call the Woman-Rights-Protection or something like that ... It will make you sleep well because you’ve bashed on a comic book. Like TWD, the Smurfs should be rated and tagged as Mature Subject Readers Only !!!

We won’t change the world with this book. If some people are leaving, ok, but other ones (like me), LOVES IT !!! And more are coming in.

Sorry for the long letter, but it really hit a sensitive part in me ... Robert, it’s honourable for you to publish those type of letters and point of views. Everyone knows you (Image & TWD team) have the courage to do so. Now i think it’s time to get over this. It really shed a depressive and sad shadow on this book. It really deflected the reason for the letter column to exist : writting constructively about the issues of a fantastic comic book. Because don’t be wrong ...

It’s just a comic book.

P.S. ... I hope my english writting wasn’t too bad ... Keep on the good work !!!

Éric Layette

Heh... French-Canadian.

Man, I love you guys.

As an avid zombie fan, this has got to be one of the best books I’ve ever read. I’ve seen just about every zombie movie, played every zombie themed videogame, and read every zombie book/comicbook out there. TWD, however, is the most engaging and intense book I’ve ever laid eyes on.

I think all of the pansy naysayers that have shown up in your letters column are missing the point of the story entirely. It’s obvious (and you’ve pretty much said this in numerous interviews and responses) that you’re going for an uber-realistic bent in your zombie world. Your story is more about the characters and how they’re able to survive not just physically but mentally and emotionally in an overwhelmingly hopeless situation. I applaud, rather than condemn, your efforts to portray your characters in a very concrete, realistic way.

Your naysayers have been infected with the typical Hollywood poison. They

expect fair treatment, story resolutions, heroism and nobility, the list goes on..... I suppose they really would like for you to write a scene where the cause of the infection is found and they go storming into the epicenter to wipe out the zombie blight "once and for all". They will not find those things here. Sure, I think every character has his/her moments of untold courage and what not, but only within the limits of reality. IN REAL LIFE, if there were a zombie invasion going on, what's left of humanity would very much slip into a more instinctive, primordial and reactive mode. Women (and men) would get raped, they would steal, they would hurt and torture people, brave folks would run for the hills and hide, and good people would resort to murder. It's a sad fact to accept, but the readers who complain about this story need to get over it if they're going to keep reading it. There will be no Hollywood endings here. Only real life. Heck, you might decide to off Rick at some point. I'm sure a lot of your readers will cry bloody murder. If they do, they don't get it. I'll just grin knowingly and keep reading!

Crap--I suppose I should scrap that whole end I had in mind where Rick covers himself in guns and storms the white house--killing all the zombies and saving the world, before blasting off with a jet pack and making love to Lori on the moon. Oh, well... we're back to no planned ending again.

I suppose you'll get some negative feedback for what happened to Martinez, too. You'll probably get called a racist. Funny. When Michone got raped, I just saw a -woman- getting raped (and I am a woman. For the record, I wasn't offended. Women get raped. It's reality. I've dealt with it). Not a BLACK woman. When Rick killed Martinez, I just saw a man getting hit by a truck and then getting strangled. Not a Hispanic man getting hit by a truck and getting strangled. Anyone who's going to complian is missing the point entirely.

The point of this rant? Just keep doing what you're doing. You're definitely not a sell-out writer and I admire you for sticking to your creative opinions. There's no place too dark and depraved that you'll lead me as a reader where I won't follow. As a zombie veteran, this is the best zombie world I've ever visited because it's the one that would most likely be born from a walking dead invasion.

I don't expect this letter to get printed, but I do hope you get to read it. Thanks for an awesome story. Also looking forward to more Marvel Zombies!!!!

Sincerely yours,

S. Tannenburn-Gilligan

Thanks for the letter, S. I appreciate the kind words.

Wow. Kirkmonster...

Issue 36 just blew me away. Every time I open up a copy of TWD, it's like the story does write itself. I hope your fertile brain stays fertile for a long time.

Thanks for printing my letter. I'm 54 years old and I think that is actually the first letter I ever had printed in a letters column. Of course, I had to buy copies of issue 36 for all my friends and family so in retrospect it is a clever marketing move on your part, eh?

The only thing I regret is them making me prove it was my letter by showing them the original on my computer. Ha, ha.

Anyway, keep on writing. You are an inspiration. I still think you are channeling the zombie universe even though you may not realize it. That doesn't make you any less of an amazing writer. I aspire to create an online comic some day and I can't imagine doing seven or eight series at a time like you do. It boggles my mind to come up with characters and plot developments for one comic idea.

It ain't easy. You don't know how many times I've written Invincible flying in to save Rick and crew and had to delete multiple pages of a script and start over. It's a pain in the ass. Freedom Ring in Marvel Team-Up? That was originally just Invincible and I had to change it at the last minute.

Like you, I have several characters from comics I drew for myself as a kid, I just wish I would have had the presence of mind and determination to do something with them years ago.

You are an amazing guy. Keep on writing. I hope they come out with some action figures for Invincible and TWD. My wife is already going nuts from the collection I have currently from over the years.

Take care.
Michael

I tell you what, Michael... I'll be sure not to make any toys for Invincible or The Walking Dead in the near future. I wouldn't want to get your wife angry at you.

Mr. Kirkman,

O.K , first let me give the obvious kudos on a great mag and please keep it going for many years to come!

Now to business and the main reason I'm writing you { first time }. I just finished reading issue 36 and I typically enjoy reading your "letter hacks" that write in until recently.

Heh.

I'm perplexed at the level of complete idiocy in our world! The grief that you have received about a "fictitious" character and how they were treated in a comic book is absolutely insane! The whole premise of a zombie apocalypse is extremely violent and gore infused by nature. DUH!!?? Why would these idiots buy a book (which by the way is their own choice) that might offend their sensitive little hearts? Can they be serious? My suggestion to all readers that are offended by this book and it's subject matter? Stick to your old copies of "Little Lulu" and "Archie". This is a big persons comic and isn't for everyone, but I love it. The same way I love when Romero filmed a zombie taking a chunk out of someone's neck. It's horror fantasy! Lighten up, Francis!

I'm with you, pal. Hopefully we've seen the end of those kind of letters for a while.

So, please Kirkman, don't water anything down. In fact, open up the flood gates and let the rvers run red! That is what made your story so cool!

Troy O'Neil

P.S. I heard that you stopped in to my local comic book shop (PACKRAT Comics Hiliard, OH.) Do you work with someone in the area, and if so, maybe a signing at the store some day?

Hm, I believe you've been deceived. Unless I've lost a chunk of my memory I've never set foot into Hiliard, Ohio or the Packrat Comics there. I'm only a state away--but I'm never been there. Sorry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was a lot more to my liking. Y' think Martinez will be a zombie now? Or do you have to get 'bitten' while you're alive? I'd still like for you to have characters call each other by name a Lot more; I've been reading at least a year and, well, I couldn't even tell you Rick's wife's name...is it Sarah? And you must admit, lot of characters to keep track of, and it is black and white. I'm pretty(as in fairly) excited about The Astounding Wolf-Man! I'll probably have read the first issue b4 you can answer this question but, what makes him unique? He can't Just be a werewolf, now can he?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

You're a weird dude, Andrew. The Astounding Wolf-Man is plenty unique, you'll see.

As for people calling people by name, I think most people are called by name at least once in every issue they appear, but I'm sure that sometimes someone slips by without a mention. The problem is, it's not natural for someone to call someone they know by name frequently. "Hi, Rick, how are you today?" "Fine, Lori, I'm doing great." "Carl, can you go grab some bullets for me." "Sure, Dad will do." "Thanks, Carl." If everyone did that--it's get old really quick. But if you pay attention--I think it's pretty easy to learn everyone's names.

Kirkman,

Hey man, I just wanted to drop you a quick e-mail in support of your Walking Dead title. After reading the letters from the last couple issues I didn't want you to think that most (or very many at least) of the book's readers felt the same way in regards to the book's intensity. Don't change a thing.

You have to ask yourself, if these people have a problem with violence & the dark side of human nature, what are they doing reading a book about the zombie holocaust & the end of human civilization in the first place?

Keep up the good work. I can't wait for the upcoming Marvel Zombie books.

Have you given up on the game Urban Dead?

C.

Man, I need to print more negative mail. The positive feedback is amazing. Never played Urban Dead... should I?

Letter Hacks,

Oh, Martinez's motivations for leading others to the prison is not evil, but Rick's fears for his group's safety is also understandable which he carries out in an efficient manner. Another gray moral area that perfectly fits your decision to do the book in black, white, and gray.

See--it's artistic to be in black and white!

On page 16, panel 4 Charlie nails the numbness and shock on Rick's face. The page is a beautiful sequence, and Rick's eyes show the anger, horror, and burden of his actions.

Charlie is awesome.

I see a war between the Woodbury folks and the prison folk on the horizon. I can't wait.

This is an adult book. What don't people understand about that? If you go to an 'R' rated movie, are you surprised that it has violence, adult themes, sexuality, gore, drug use or nudity? If you are offended by 'R' rated movies, then DON'T watch. I repeat: this is an adult book. Michonne's rape is/was disturbing. It should be. The Governor's death (?) and torture is/was disturbing. Yes, it should be. The Walking Dead world is harsh and unforgiving. I think Kirkman's writing decisions doesn't pull back from that fact, and he shouldn't. All or many superhero comics have people bludgeoning each other into oblivion (yes, they eventually get brought back). Is this okay? People who take issue with the violence in this book are blind to the violence that permeates superhero comics. Remember Bugs Bunny? He was smashing heads with a mallet, dropping huge objects onto Elmer Fudd. Did you boycott those cartoons?

They do today... some of them at least. It really is a fucked up world we live in. My friends kid is on a soccer league where they don't keep score. They literally get two teams out there to play a game but they try not to let the kids know who's winning and they don't have a score board. They do this so no kid goes home feeling that bitter sting of defeat. Which, y'know, kinda drives out that whole competitive nature out of kids and rids them of a will to succeed. Ugh. You think people are pussies now? Give it another ten years for these coddled freaks to join the workforce.

People, please take your panties that have bunched up out your ass. Now would be preferable.

Kirkman and Company, onward and forward with your story. A most excellent story, indeed!

Until Rick gets a chainsaw for a hand, Make Mine Captain Kirkman!
Sophea Uk

No chainsaw hand.

Mr Kirkman,

I loved issue 36, but not for the reasons you may think, The muder of Martinez, and yes it was a murder, was shocking. Rick left the prison with one thing in mind, stop Martinez by any means necessary. Those means turned out to be hitting Martinez from behind, a cowardly act, then choking the life out of the defenseless man. Then Rick rationalizes that it was to protect his family and the others at the prison, but his explanation to his wife does not fit the scene that unfolded earlier. Rick was angry with only one thing on his mind. Charge in first and then ask questions. No attempt was made at reasoning or capture. Nothing he said or did can really excuse the fact he murdered a man.

I found the whole thing compelling to watch. The before, during and after. I don't agree with Rick murdering Martinez, or his rationalization for it, making it hard for me to like the character. He seems to be the character that has fallen the most after Michonne.

I may not like the 'hero' of the Walking Dead, but I do want to see what he does next.

Luke Sims
Melbourne, Australia

Rick is living through hell, please don't lose sight of that. He's going to do things from time to time that seem a bit questionable to us, here in our safe world, but I think if you position yourself in his frame of mind—while is actions aren't honorable they can seem a bit more reasonable when cast in a certain skewed perspective that would come from living around so much death.

When you've killed so many human looking things and shot friends so they wouldn't become those things... taking a human life would eventually become a very easy thing given the right circumstances.

Rick's come a long way.

Kirkman you sick SoB what have you done?! I read Invincible and I grew up on old horror comics from the 60's and 70's. I've never found any current age horror comics that compared to them, until a friend let me borrow The Walking Dead trade vol. 1. After reading it I was hooked. I read vol.1 through 5 in a matter of 3 days and then waited a month for my friend to finish getting #31 to #36 (WD sells out almost every week around here, so its hard to find issues sometimes, so I'm getting the first six trades). The characters are well written and make you care about them (I almost cried when Rick lost his hand and thought Glenn talked).

After what happened in vol. 5, I thought what will Kirkman do to top this? Then I read #33. Torture of the Governor was brutal and gruesome, and made me think do I want to read a comic like this? DAMN STRAIGHT I DO! I read every page twice. I've added WD to my pull list. To all those people bitching about your book, the kid comics are in another section, you might want to try them my 5 year old says their great. Please don't water down the book to please them, I love it the way it is. Anyone that started reading a zombie comic thinking it wouldn't get weird or twisted has never seen at zombie movie. I don't know if you'll print this but I wanted you to know that as long as the book is good, you have someone with you for the long haul to issue 300. Two questions: Will the Christmas Special be in trade 6? And Will we see more about those two later? Keep up the great work.

Mike

Hm... I don't know when the Christmas story would see print in a TPB. It takes place around the same time as issue 7, so it should have been in the volume 2 TPB... but y'know, it wasn't drawn then. I may never print it in TPB. Sorry.

Hey Kirkman--

Read #36. Classic, classic issue.

QUESTION! Now that Lori is in month 9, does she pee when she sneezes?

Cheers,
Andrew Garcia-Price

I don't know that that's all that common among pregnant women...

Hello

First let me say that I am a huge, fan so much so that I buy both single issue and trade as they come out and want to get the hardcover soon, and love where the comic are going, somehow you have captured, depression, joy, love, hate, humiliation and just the horror of human nature. I was shocked at #36 letter hacks and people hate for #33 I mean maybe because here in Canada we have tv that has people that swear and, nudes on normal cable tv, people in the u.s and other places just aren't used to violence, I found NOTHING wrong with the comic, in fact I think its great that you show the real nature of people without law or rule, what do people think will happen in a situation like that, rapist don't become cured because of zombie outbreak, killers will kill, and well crime goes on, this is why people freak out on planes when there is a plane emergency they are kept out of the truth and can't handle when the real stuff happens.

The comic isn't even that bad it could be a lot worse and for those fellow fans that want to know how, well for one the story could have arced really bad, since a prisoner could have been a child rapist, or something, and that could freak a lot of people out, but hey just to show how bad something could get in a situation like that.

Now on to the good parts, the comic has captured how good people do what they do to protect the ones they love, and when you have to look after yourself and others this comic shows just how far a person can go.

The comic has a mix of happy and sad depression and bliss, for one i'm glad that people still want to get married in the story or to lighten the mood they focus on the kids and the fact that even though they know what's going on they don't, I mean classic scene is when he asks if she is still his girlfriend over something so stupid we wouldn't even think about.

So anyway you guys are doing a great job keep it up!

Thanks!

Now onto my questions

1. are we going to find out who the father of the baby is?

The matter is pretty much settled at this point. It's really not an issue.

2. any major twists coming up

Always.

3. I know that things might end, and the comic series can't last forever but I wanted to know if it ends will you continue the world with a new story with new people, and bring old friends back into the new one.

There are no plans for this book to end any time even remotely soon. So there's no reason to even talk about a spin-off series.

4. ok more pages in black and white, but will there ever be colour, nothing wrong with it the way it is but wanted to ask?

No. Never. Not until I'm washed up and doing anything I can to make a buck—then I might. I mean, let's be honest here. I've got a kid to worry about.

anyway thats it, wanted to let you guys know that you have fans up here in canada "A"

p.s. anyone else notice that taking a ring from a corpse is really really gross, hope she boils it first hahaha

Marlon

I'm sure Glenn washed it off before giving it to her.

Hey Robert,

Geez, this whole series just keeps getting better, huh? Well, I figure since everyone's throwing their two cents about how shocking and perverse the Woodbury arc is, here's mine.....

Oh, please... more of this, please!

Quit your fucking belly aching.

Yes! This is the best letters column ever... sigh.

I am so , so sick of reading letters proclaiming Kirkman as a racist, misogynist blah blah fucking blah. It's such utter, utter bullshit, and anyone who has a least two functioning brain cells and took the time to read the series as a whole would soon shut the fuck up.

I mean, I suppose I could just stop printing the repetitive letters... but I've got pages to fill here.

This whole load reminds me of when I was reading Preacher- and Starr (one of the main villains of the series, for those that haven't read it) was unceremoniously bugged in an alley way by a giant, scary English man. Starr, after his.....ordea!..... found himself quite fond of buggery. (never one of those sentences you ever think you'll write, is it?...anyway) So, a flurry of letters, saying Garth Ennis was advocating rape, saying that all homosexuals were only Homosexual because of someone forcing them, blah, blah, fucking blah.

Same shit here.

Rape is wrong. No one disputes that.

But the Governor is a BAD guy. Bad Guy's do Bad things. This is an adult comic. there are going to be disturbing, horrible situations that arise. The Bad guys are going to do horrible, shitty things. Was the murder of Hershel's two children any less shocking? Or is child murder somehow less terrible or horrifying than rape?

I think what pisses me off the most is that it was insinuated that and I'm paraphrasing here "a lot of white readers probably whacked off to that scene"

Fuck you, seriously.

As a white guy, the idea of any woman being subjected to that sort of humiliation and degradation is fucking sickening. I guess what your saying is if it was a white girl that the governor tortured and raped, it would've all been okay, huh? Rape is rape. It's wrong, regardless of wether the woman is white, black, Martian, whatever.

Me, I don't know anyone who'd jerk off to the thought of that. Anyone well adjusted, anyway. guess we run in different circles.

Yeah, Racism is fucked, but I see it from all sides. So a nickels worth of free advice- see people, not colour. black, white, red, yellow.....we all bleed, shit and die the same. Bet you kiss the woman you love good night the same way I do. We're all on the same planet, after all....

But there was one good point. Michonne is a good, strong black character. So is Tyresse. And Morgan....

How you can read the Walking Dead since issue one and then accuse Kirkman of being even remotely racist is fuckin' beyond me....

The Governor's a red neck asshole, sure, but is he representative of all white folks?

Well, I DO hate white people. That's a fact.

Once again. He's a BAD GUY. He's a total and utter bastard. Bad guy's do Bad shit. As a writer myself, I find a lot of characters I create -particularly bad guys quite loathsome. but that's their function in a story. you want people to hate your villains! you want the audience to scream for the villain to get what's coming to him!

Just cause you wnte a racist doesn't mean you are one. You write a child murdering psycho, doesn't mean you are one.....Villains are meant to be hated. I guess that's why it was so satisfying to see Michonne get her much deserved vengeance on the bastard. Sadly, the narrow minded, judgemental fools wouldn't have seen that. Mainly because they brought their own political bullshit into reading a brilliant, well thought out, entertaining series, and decided that the second something happened that got their panties in a wad, they were out of here.

But I gotta say....If you going to give up on such a great piece of work after one issue, really, perhaps a comic as adult and mature as this is not for you. If your mentality is such that you think people reading this series would jerk off to the idea that a female character is being brutalised..... dude, clearly, your not of a mature enough mental state to appreciate The Walking Dead for what it truly is. People trying to survive in a world where the rules and ethics we know are gone. A reflection of what could, or would happen if Mankind was faced with a disaster of such massive proportions. If society broke down to the Degree portrayed in The Walking Dead, would people set themselves up as little despots, like the governor?

You bet your ass they would.

But, people would also fight to hold on to their humanity and not descend into such savagery, to build a community and keep themselves and their loved ones safe, much like Rick and Tyresse are doing.

Robert, please don't let any of this negative, ill conceived bullshit affect the way you write this series. Don't second guess yourself, because the people who truly grasp The Walking Dead will stick with it till the end.

Anyway, bitch over.....

Sorry, it just pisses me off when people bring their agenda -o- bullshit into the party without stopping to think for a moment about the context of the action that offended them.

Question time!

I know you have no plans to reveal the cause of the Zombies.... but it'd be really cool to see the characters throwing around theories on it. That was always one of my favourite moments in Romero's stuff, the guys just sitting around, throwing out their ideas on why it was all happening. A scene or two like that'd be nice.

There's stuff like that in the future. It's coming, just give it time.

Rick's hand- forget the chainsaw! When the aliens show up around 75 or so, will he get a laser gun hand? :)

Heh... good one.

Astounding Wolf-man! Holy shit!!!! I love Zombies- My fiancee loves Werewolves! Robert, how did you know.....? Bringing couples closer together- there's a cover blurb for you.....

Or maybe I'm trying to steal your fiancée? Ever think of that?

Army? Bikers? Redneck drunken farmer Zombie sweeper teams.....We seeing any of these guys anytime soon?

Eventually, sure.

Any new additions to the group coming along?

Yes, I don't get enough complaints about the large cast.

Um.....Is Michonne talking to herself or her sword?

Very insightful...

Brittney spears Zombie? forget that- Any plans for Henry Rollins to show up soon? Cause lets face it- If anyone's gonna survive the Zombie invasion, it's Henry- he's too fuckin' mean to get bitten.....

Very true.

Check out Zombie Honeymoon if you ever get the chance. It's not a bad little flick.

Wow, two recommendations in one letters column for a movie I've never heard of. I'm adding it to my Blockbuster Online queue right now.

I know you've got no plans to expand the series at all, or do a shit load of spin-offs, but an annual maybe? used to love annual's when I was a kid. be nice to see them make a comeback. I sure wouldn't mind kicking an extra few bucks once a year for some extra Walking Dead. You could use the annual for a few shorter stories- other locations around the world, or the country, could pop in on Morgan and Duane, Maybe show the first few weeks of the outbreak.... just an idea.

Probably never. I like the idea of 1-whatever being all you need to buy. I don't want people going "well, the annual takes place between 45 and 46." And stuff like that.

Invincible is still awesome.

Yes.

Oh, yeah, before I go- this whole 28 days later thing- last time I had a letter printed, some poor soul went apeshit at me on account of my saying 28 days later didn't have real zombies.... Well they weren't! They weren't technically dead, rotting returned from the grave zombies!

Very true.

They were just poor shmucks infected with a virus..... look, okay flick, lost it a little when they left London, but they still weren't Zombies! Tom Savini himself said so, and he would know!

Take care, Robert,
thanks for a great book,

Cheers,
Jake Reedy

Thanks for writing.

Dear Kirkman,

I am amazed at how much attention Michonne's revenge is generating. The backlash is far greater than when the Governor raped her, which was treated more as a racial issue by the readership- which I have a problem with on multiple levels.

Admittedly, Michonne being raped (even off screen) is particularly troublesome to me. I can think of no acts more vile and depraved than rape and child molestation. Both are worthy of the death penalty, in and of themselves. A resultant death/ murder would not be a prerequisite for lethal injection. Intuitively, I think there is a reason that child molesters are reviled even in a prison atmosphere.

That said, I think that Michonne (that's right, even a comic book character) deserved her opportunity at revenge no matter how graphic it was portrayed. The absolute absurdity of calling the sequence "voyeuristic porn" says alot more about the author of that letter than the issue itself. Anything that has (or will?) befell the Governor is just not bad enough in my estimation.

Enough of that, though, as I think the perpetuation of the whole situation gives rise to a life of it's own, though I do not think it was as despised as the rape of Astoria in Cerebus. At least in that case the focus was on the act itself and not the ethnicity of the perpetrator or victim.

Overall, I like the series. Sometimes I find myself picking at the little things. Like

the Cesar Martinez-Traitor storyline just moving so swiftly and the amount of conversation that took place when Rick and all found the compound overrun by zombies when they got back from Woodbury but , in the main, the storyline stays with me for the month (?haha) leading up to the next issue. That tells me that you have produced something good there.

I do like the latest twist that appears to have the Prison and Woodburyheaded on a collision course. Though it appears that the Prison is highly defensible. Woodbury would have to overcome the wide open spaces around the prison, the 'biters' lurking there (which in some issues is a significant number) and the sniper capability that the towers affords Rick's group. The prisoners (ites?) would be able to pick off the able-bodied men and just take in the women and children so they could more readily control the new population. Which may work unless the Woodbury women are all Michonne-like, but let's not open another can of worms, right? Much less the grief I can envision for just intimating the women and children would be "controllable". Which does not look to be too far off from the current situation that is prevalent in Woodbury now.

Again, thanks for the good read.

Dawson

PS. You said that you hope to go to 300 and beyond. Is that an open reference to the standard set by Dave Sim?

Of course. That's the benchmark set for creator-owned series, right? Sim and Gerhard are the best.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading issue 33 of the Walking Dead, and for the first time in my life felt compelled to write a letter to a comic book.

I just want to say that I'm shocked, and I'm not going to ramble about not reading this book anymore, 'cause I love it (As I love to read all your books), but I do think that I will not be reading this issue again in a long time.

I understand this was the effect that the issue was intended for (Shock), and again, this is not a critic, is a statement of facts, I still love the book, I loved the issue, but I'm shocked (it even made me look away from it at one point), so there, if that was the effect that you were looking for, at least in my humble person you got it.

I know this letter is useless, but I felt this issue so much that I just had to write to you.

Loving this book and everything you write, keep up the good work.

Oscar Balderas

Useless, I think not. It's good to hear the book is having an effect on people. Very cool.

Kirkman

a question for you...

How come in vampire movies everyone already knows what a vampire is but in zombie movies no one has ever heard of a zombie before?

Good question, and I really don't know the answer. Maybe it has to do with the fact that zombies, MODERN zombies (created by Romero, based on I Am Legend by Richard Matheson) were only introduced in the late '60s while people have believed in Vampires for hundreds of years. I don't think anyone in real life has ever actually "believed" in zombies. So in Vampire movies--people aren't really reacting to the movies they've seen--and that's all they'd be doing in zombie movies and that'd be silly. Hey--maybe I did answer it.

In The Lost Boys, Salem's Lot, the Buffyverse etc. the struggle is for people to actually believe that vampires exist. Once they acknowledge that vampires are real they immediately know all the other aspects of the mythos i.e. stakes, crosses, holy water, garlic and the like.

In the Romero zombie movies, the Living Dead series, Resident Evil, Undead and even in your own fine series while people know the word "zombie" no one seems familiar with the cannon of zombie film and literature. Just once I would like to see a zombie movies where someone is like, "wow zombies, okay. shoot them in the brain, don't let them bite you, etc."

from a storytelling perspective I suppose that vampires have enough of a personality that you don't need to establish the rules of encountering vampires in order for the threat they pose to be dramatic, whereas with zombies the drama is in the protagonists learning how to stay alive as the zombies have no real personality or character.

still is there an in-plot explanation for this? were all the guys who watched zombie movies eaten at some sort of SciFi convention in the first hours of the outbreak? were they all dangerously over or underweight and thus easily bitten and turned? are there zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead and, if so, where are the zombie movie aficionados?

Love the series,
Scott

If there are zombie movies in the world of The Walking Dead, I'd imagine nobody has seen them. It'd just be silly for them to be using movies as a guideline for what to do. It's shatter the semblance of realism, I'd think.

Dear Robert--

Wow! That must be the most racist statement I have ever seen in not just your comic, but in any comic I've ever read. "...A great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue." It's so reassuring to know that "Charles L." believes that every "white" person on the planet is a sexual deviant and pervert and that we all get sexually excited by scenes of rape and torture. Or maybe he's just projecting his own emotional response to the stimuli onto others so he'll feel less guilty about having these degenerate feelings. Seek help, Charles; you are not normal.

And thanx to you, Kirkman, for a fun comic and for being king of the cliffhanger.

Sincerely,
A beige guy with undertones of magenta and veins of cyan...

Agustin Goba

Thanks for chiming in on the subject, Agustin.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

is it your desire to run over mexicans with your car? or perhaps you wish to cut of your own hand and mutilate your man meat? It severely angered me when I read all those letters accusing you of being a racist or it's every white man's dream to rape a strong black woman. What the hell is wrong with these people. It's a fucking fictional story and if you don't fucking like it don't fucking read it. I like how these people never commented on two little white girls getting brutally killed. They live in a brutal world and nasty shit is going to happen. No character is safe. Rick's hand was cut off, most of Hershel's kids are dead, the twins parents are dead. If nothing happened to Tyreese or Michonne, how would they grow as characters? The Walking Dead is all about the characters. People should stop bitching and just realize we are in good hands. With that being said, I want to say thank you for all the great comics you've given us. I don't think I've ever enjoyed so many comics from one writer, ever. Some questions:

1. When will we see posters, shirts, and toys for walking dead and invincible?

There's already been an Invincible T-Shirt and Poster. There's more in the works. There's a Walking Dead poster coming in September, keep an eye out for that. And as for toys... keep your eyes directed at the skies... there may be news just around the corner.

2. Will you be at San Diego Comicon this year?

Yep. I'll be at the Image booth for a while.

3. Would you name a mexican character after me? Please?

Nah.

4. I love getting walking dead twice a month...will this be happening again in the future?

Count on it. We're always messing up and playing catch up!

So, until aliens come down from from the sky and start raping humans and zombies make mine kirkman!!!

-Charles Justis Velazquez

Thanks, sir.

Robert and TWD.
It's been a while since I've written to you regarding the book. I definitely enjoyed the Woodbury arc. I think the character arc for Rick, Tyreese, Hershel, et al, is amazing. I believe when you first set out to write this book you thought to yourself, "In most Zombie stories there's always an evil-survivor-leader (i.e. The Mayor of Woodbury), but we really never see how that guy got so twisted." And then you came up with Rick. The loss of his hand, the willingness to do whatever is necessary to protect his family, and the moral ambiguity or his actions are all more signs that I believe that ultimately this will be the story of Carl (Luke) vs. Rick (Darth Vader). Just a thought.

Only time will tell.

Questions: Seriously, with the growing popularity of zombie films (i.e. 1. Michael Stryczynski adapting Max Brooks' "World War Z" for Brad Pitt's production company, 28 Weeks later, Day of the Dead remake, Romero's "Diary of the Dead," etc.) how have you not been approached to adapt TWD? Do you think they're (they being "Hollywood execs") waiting for you to reach a certain number of issues before you're worthy of an adaptation?

Kermet Merl Key

The ways of Hollywood are strange and mysterious. Who knows why it hasn't happened yet. I doubt it's the number of issues published.

Hello,

I am writing in response to a letter that was printed in Walking Dead #35 by a Charles L. First, let me say that I have been a comic reader since my childhood and an avid reader since my teens through my age now of 38. I have never been motivated to write to a comics letter page...until now. This motivation pertaining to Charles L. saying in his letter referring to Walking Dead issue #29: "If you want the honest truth Mr. Kirkman, a great deal of your white readers probably whacked off to that issue."

Let's be clear about this Charles. You are a RACIST. I was appalled reading your letter and hope you realize that your kind of mentality is exactly why racism exists. Any attempt you thought you were making to educate society about the evils of racism were effectively negated simply by your blatant ignorance. You should be ASHAMED of yourself for having made this statement.

I am truly sorry Mr. Kirkman and Walking Dead readers have to be subjected to hateful letters like that. But I'm also glad that letters are not censored and that you give people who write in an equal voice. I've thoroughly enjoyed reading Walking Dead. Please keep up the good work.

Thank you,
Matthew McDonough

Thanks for weighing in, Matthew.

Howdy Kirkman,

So your comic Walking Dead is pretty much the most amazing thing I've ever read. It truly shows the potential two nitch storytelling genres, comics and zombies, has within it. Both take a skillful hand to tell a good tale, and to reflect reality in an unreal situation is an outstanding achievement. And so to see how much heat has been sparked because of the rape of Michonne is, at once, unsurprising and totally absurd.

Look, what happened was about the brutalization of a woman too strong for someone's liking. End of story. It wasn't about making a black woman strong only

to be taken down by a white man. It's not a jerk-off fantasy. It's about a particular situation where one particular woman with certain particular traits who pissed off another particular man with particular tastes. Do you think every crime to ever happen is based souly on race? Please. Come off it.

Things happen for different reasons because of the different people involved. These are characters that you've created, sure. But as any good writer knows, once the characters are created they pretty much have their own personalities and behaviours. That's what makes your story amazing is that you allow the characters to act accordingly; even if it does end tragically.

The world isn't PC; our real one and the one in Walking Dead. Things happen as they happen. If I wanted to get offended I'd ask why there are no gay characters, or biracial ones, or punk ones, or anything that comprises what I am. But I'm not offended. Why? Because the characters aren't me, and I know this. But I still love seeing how the characters unfold and act or react.

Your storytelling is amazing. And BIG ups to Charlie Adlard and Cliff Rathburn for the AMAAAZING art. Keep making awesome comics like this and I'll keep coming back for more. Anyone who doesn't is a damned fool.

-Jeremy Alva

Sorry about the lack of gay biracial punks, Jeremy. I promise that by the time this series is over most every group of people will be represented and hopefully with more than just one character. I've got a lot of issues left in me.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I'm a longtime faithful reader. I know that you've been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject... and I'm not just writing as a female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

First of all... to all those men who wrote in complaining that you "took" power away from Michonne during the rape scene (which actually occurred off-screen) - the fact is, that you were showing the character of the Governor trying to take power from Michonne. Guess what? Rape happens everyday. Its ugly and its vicious, and its plain evil... but it happens to white women, black women, Asian women, Hispanic women.... well, you get my point? The rapist has no conscience... he doesn't care about the pain and suffering that he is putting his victim through. And it's a pain that lasts long after the actual act of the rape is done. One thing I've learned is that you gradually go from being a rape victim into a rape survivor. It's not an easy process and it usually takes year, but the thing is, you're never the same person again.

I want you to know, that as a rape survivor, I was not offended by Michonne's rape. The setting of the story is post-apocalypse, with all the barriers of civilization being broken down. Have your readers forgotten the quick breakdown of civil behavior during the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane? In reading your last comic, I think that the point you are trying to drive home is that man - and woman - can quickly lose gnp of their humanity in extreme situations. Unfortunately, there are predators in the world who don't even need the pressure of a catastrophe to make them into rapists and murderers.

As for Michonne's retribution.... yes, it was extremely violent, yet these readers who are complaining had no problem with zombies eating somebody's intestines or even the Governor hacking off Rick's hand? I don't condone extreme violence, but I also know that it's been a part of human history since the dawn of time.

Would I wish to have the same opportunity with my own rapist? At times, I do have a fantasy of him burning in hell.... He was a serial rapist, and only he and God knows how many women he's hurt in his lifetime... but I don't know if I would want to carrying the burden of killing - or even just torturing - another human being with me. Yet, in Michonne's situation, there is no longer police to serve and protect, or courts of law to set up trial and punishment. The Governor had hurt so many people in the past, without a single thought of the pain he was inflicting on others, so I personally have no problems with Michonne acting as judge and jury in this case. The only alternative is her just running away earlier with Rick, leaving the Governor there to continue to hurt other people. And I'm not saying that she did it just out of a sense of protecting others - she definitely was making it personal retribution. But who can say how they would personally react in such extreme circumstances?

After what I call my Bad Incident, I couldn't even bear to watch violent movies for years - including my beloved horror movies. It took time for me to recover - I'd grown up watching all the classic horror movies - but now I often see horror movies as a commentary on our own society.

I think you really hit home with this when Rick hit Martinez with the camper without a second thought. Martinez should have not been so sneaky and had instead talked to the group about perhaps helping the women and children left at his camp, instead of just running off, so he does share some responsibility for his own death. The fact that Rick later questions his actions and his lack of remorse, asking if he what he's done is evil... that is what truly separates the type of person he is from the Governor.

Okay... besides all this "deep" stuff about the story and characters... I want to say that I LOVE your comic, and I'm glad that you are not afraid to tackle controversial storylines and characters. Please keep up the good work!

Valena Baker

Thank you very much, Valeria. It's hard to respond to emails like this with more than a "thank you for writing" and I apologize for that. I appreciate the perspective you've shared and it's always good to hear from female readers.

Letters like this really do keep me going. I sit in a basement all day typing stories and I really how no idea how they'll be received or interpreted when I'm done. Thanks again for writing in.

And with that, folks, we wrap up another monstrous letters column.

This MAY be the last issue that ships before San Deigo--so please, come on by and shake my hand if you come to that thing. I'll be at the Image and Marvel booths for scheduled signings. Should be easy to find.

I'll see you all back here again very soon.

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
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P.O. BOX 54386
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OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Okay, I know we're putting out issues fast now. It seems like I'm doing a new letters column every week. Assuming there are no printer delays we will be putting out issues on a better than monthly schedule over the next few issues.

The statue by Clayburn Moore has been completed and should be available in stores very soon, I'm think over the next few months. The second piece of the diorama, an extra zombie coming after Rick has just been sculpted and painted and it's damn awesome. When the whole thing is done and can be put together it's going to be sweet.

When it's all done it'll be a cool scene of Rick facing off against three separate zombies. Cool stuff. Clayburn Moore is a genius.

Now, let's dive into the old mailbag and see what's what.

Robert,
I got into your book because I was bored. To tell you the truth, I really don't like comics very much. I liked "Wolverine: Origins" when that came out, which I also read out of boredom, but I usually don't give comics a chance. I was at my friend's house, I had just finished shooting a scene for an independent film I've been working on, I didn't have anything else to do, and my friend, was ironically enough, acting like a zombie. Let's just say he smokes Marlboro Greens more than he probably should. Anyway, so I was looking around for something to do, I mean, he had no cable, he didn't want to play Smash Bros, and I didn't want to go home because I knew the moment I got there, I would start editing the scene and I really wanted a break, so finally, I saw a few graphic novels sitting on the coffee table. They read "The Walking Dead" and they were volumes one through four. I figured "what the hell, I'll just flip through some pages. It's better than nothing." I flipped through the first four or so pages of the first issue and suddenly my mind nagged me to go back and actually read them, so I did, and to make a long story shorter, I've been hooked ever since.

Recently, I was finally able to catch up to all the released issues and, mark my words, one day, you or your agent will get a call from me where I will ask to have a meeting about making "The Walking Dead" into a live action feature film, that is, if no one beats me to it. By then, I will have a little more credibility and higher stature as a film-maker. It's your story telling, I feel so drawn to it, so immersed by it, and what makes it so bizarre is that you are able to do

this through a medium that I personally don't really even like. To me, comic books have always reminded me of looking through story boards, which is work to me. Not my cup of tea, but your work is different. I just wanted to let you know that you are working on such an amazing project, that even a person that cares not for the medium, loves it still.

That has got to count for something. Oh, out of curiosity, hypothetically speaking, if a film version of your story were to be made, would you rather it be in black and white? I've thought about this a lot, and to me, it would make for a nice contrasting style. I know it probably wouldn't be as marketable or distributable in the eyes of a run of the mill Hollywood studio, but artistically, I would rather see it sans color, like the book. It would also make all the special effects more convincing, and seeing as how there is so much blood in it, it might be the only way to get out of having an NC-17 rating.

Yeah, I don't really know. It'd be neat if it were in black and white, and you've got some valid reasons and benefits listed here, but I'm really not sure. If I had my druthers I'd certainly at least push for washed-out color, like Saving Private Ryan but maybe even a little closer to gray.

I was also wondering, what cover art for TWD do you like the best? The cover art for issue nine is my favorite as far as composition, style, color, and even beauty, but I love the symbolism, irony, and dichotomy shown in the cover for issue 21, especially by the addition of that one lone butterfly (which is probably what Carl and Sophia are looking at).

I really like Tony's covers to 23 and 24 quite a bit. Charlie and Cliff's cover to issue 28 is one of my all-time favorites for sure. It's always changing but for now I'd probably have to go with 33 being my favorite but the covers for 44-48 are goddamn stunning. You'll all see them very soon. They're great.

Mostly, I just wanted to let you know, that from a fellow storyteller to another, I really admire your work, I am drawn to it so much that it's hard for me to think about it objectively. I care about these characters man. Anyway, I hope you print this, if you do, I'll get to keep it as a memento of the first pseudo-conversation we had prior to hopefully working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Chuck Meré

Okay, you’ve got my contact info future-Spielberg. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mr. Kirkman,

I’ve been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I’m a longtime faithful reader. I know that you’ve been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject... and I’m not just writing as a female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

First of all... to all those men who wrote in complaining that you “took” power away from Michonne during the rape scene (which actually occurred off-screen) - the fact is, that you were showing the character of the Governor trying to take power from Michonne. Guess what? Rape happens every day. Its ugly and its vicious, and its plain evil... but it happens to white women, black women, Asian women, Hispanic women.... well, you get my point? The rapist has no conscience... he doesn’t care about the pain and suffering that he is putting his victim through. And it’s a pain that lasts long after the actual act of the rape is done. One thing I’ve learned is that you gradually go from being a rape victim into a rape survivor. It’s not an easy process and it usually takes years, but the thing is, you’re never the same person again.

I want you to know, that as a rape survivor, I was not offended by Michonne’s rape. The setting of the story is post-apocalypse, with all the barriers of civilization being broken down. Have your readers forgotten the quick breakdown of civil behavior during the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane? In reading your last comic, I think that the point you are trying to drive home is that man - and woman - can quickly lose grip of their humanity in extreme situations. Unfortunately, there are predators in the world who don’t even need the pressure of a catastrophe to make them into rapists and murderers.

As for Michonne’s retribution.... yes, it was extremely violent, yet these readers who are complaining had no problem with zombies eating somebody’s intestines or even the Governor hacking off Rick’s hand? I don’t condone extreme violence, but I also know that its been a part of human history since the dawn of time.

Would I wish to have the same opportunity for retribution with my own rapist? At times, I do have a fantasy of him burning in hell.... He was a serial rapist, and only he and God knows how many women he’s hurt in his lifetime... but I don’t know if I would want to be carrying the emotional burden of killing - or even just torturing - another human being with me. Yet, in Michonne’s situation, there is no longer police to serve and protect, or courts of law to set up trial and punishment. The Governor had hurt so many people in the past, without a single thought of the pain he was inflicting on others, so I personally have no problems with Michonne acting as judge and jury in this case. The only alternative is her just running away earlier with Rick, leaving the Governor there to continue to hurt other people. And I’m not saying that she did it just out of a sense of protecting others - she definitely was making it personal retribution. But who can say how they would personally react in such extreme circumstances?

After what I call my Bad Incident, I couldn’t even

bear to watch violent movies for years - including my beloved horror movies. It took time for me to recover - I’d grown up watching all the classic horror movies - but now I often see horror movies as a commentary on our own society.

I think you really hit home with this when Rick hit Martinez with the camper without a second thought. Martinez should have not been so sneaky and had instead talked to the group about perhaps helping the women and children left at his camp, instead of just running off, so he does share some responsibility for his own death. The fact that Rick later questions his actions and his lack of remorse, asking if he what he’s done is evil... that is what truly separates the type of person he is from the Governor.

Okay... besides all this “deep” stuff about the story and characters... I want to say that I LOVE your comic, and I’m glad that you are not afraid to tackle controversial storylines and characters. Please keep up the good work!

Valeria

Thank you very much for writing in and sharing your experience. I really appreciate it.

Dear Robert,

One of the main reasons I find The Walking Dead to be the greatest book out is the questions of morality which are raised on nearly a monthly basis. In a world populated by constant horror and death, ethics clearly change. Most recently, Rick’s murder of Martinez displayed a sort of kill or be killed ethics. As a police officer, Rick represented one of the last standing enforcers of the old world’s sense of right and wrong. However, at this point in the story, the issue of right and wrong is nearly gone completely. While most people’s sense of morality allows for one to value the life of their family over others, I get the feeling that Rick would perform the most heinous sorts of acts to ensure his family’s safety. Yet even as Rick’s actions become less and less noble in the traditional sense of morality, I still think he’s doing the “right” thing. As a student of philosophy, these gray areas fascinate me.

I was wondering if you have had the chance to read The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy. The book has many parallels to TWD. The story follows a father and son trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. While there are no flesh eating zombies, the father and son must escape constant danger from starvation and fend off attacks from bands of cannibals. At one point in the story, the author even refers to the father and son as “the walking dead.” Like TWD, hope has been nearly destroyed by the state of the world, and morality has been whittled down to bare survivalism. It’s a great, quick read, and judging by your work, I think you’d appreciate it.

Thanks for getting me into comics.
Greg Theilmann, San Diego, CA

The Road, huh? I’ll have to check it out.

Robert Kirkman,

“issue 37-- which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH.” Not that I’m bitching but why do you set yourself up for the readers to fill up Letter Hacks with complaints about the book not being on time?

Anyway, great comic book! I've been with you since issue 8 and am never disappointed with the story or

art. You have several very good comics out every month (well, almost) and for that I don't mind the wait. Please, keep up the good work.

Matt Coppins

Well, there's not much I can do once a book is out of my hands. There are a lot of times when

things seem 100% ready to happen... and then don't. For instance, I said 39 would be out two weeks after 38. Now, I turned it in two weeks after 38, so in a perfect world it would have shipped two weeks after 38. But I forgot it was around the time of the big Comic-Con International in San Diego. During this time everyone and their brother is printing up everything but the kitchen sink for the con. So 39 got lost in the shuffle and as I type this, still isn't out, but looks like it's going to be three or even four weeks after issue 38. I'm hoping for four.

Now, 39 isn't even out yet and I'm writing this letters column to send in with issue 40, with 39 pushed back a bit, this issue should be in stores sooner than a month after issue 39, but y'know... I don't know for sure.

I get excited too, that's what it really burns down to. I like to get these books out and I try to give you letters column readers a heads up. I really should stop, though... it's getting ridiculous. So I'm not going to be making predictions anymore. I'm just going to try and turn the books in as fast as I can and keep working.

We'll see how that works out.

Dear Kirkman:

Greetings and salutations, I recently had a fest with your Walking Dead, from #1 to #36 last night.

I usually spend some time with my friends, mostly rolling polyhedrons, watching geeky movies, drinking coffee and talking about you (yeah, you) and your colleagues. That's how I knew that the Ultimate Cable guy had made a comic book about zombies, survival horror and stuff.

At first, I must confess, didn't have much faith because all the zombie comics I had read in the past were pretty ugly (I mean, Resident Evil comic books, anyone?), but I when I knew that was a B/W, old-school, made by a zombie geek comic; well I had at least to see it.

And well, what can I say? I just loved it!

I know that many readers can say at least the same, but the reason of writing these lines is to support you in the now controversial issue about the raping, the racism and the pornographic violence in your comic (?).

Please don't listen seriously to all that aggressive words from the kind of people who need the Comic Code Authority to decide for them what can and what cannot read, I like to think that we're all grown up guys who can difference the reality from the fiction.

I could say something about the behavior of ordinary human beings in extreme situations and illustrate it with the raping camps and other aberrations proper of the wartimes, but I don't like to make politics of an entertainment product which is not oriented to do it. And it won't be anything we haven't heard before.

So what I want to say is thank you for being honest with yourself, your characters and us, your devoted public.

Sincerely,
Juan M. Trillo

PS: Please forgive the broken English.

Honestly didn't notice any.

PS2: I loved the Christmas story in issue #34, and it made me think: what about a backup story of each main character before the zombie infestation? Like an average day in the life of (not like LOST, but well, yeah, exactly like LOST). Think about it.

Yeah, I'm not going to be purposefully cribbing something from lost any time soon. At least not until issue 43. I do try to keep this book as original as possible.

Thanks for writing, I plan to stick to my guns on all issues. Don't worry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was pretty okay, dawg. In Idol-ese, the beginning was "karaoke", but the last half or more was "magic". I kinda enjoyed your little backstory in the letters column this ish! 1990? Why such a late bloomer? Didn't most people Grow Up Reading comics? Like me for instance! If you were born in '78 or '79, I was probably reading comics b4 you were Born. I dunno if you answered this question in #37's column, but I'd like to ask what really got you into comics specifically...was it one series, a particular issue? My older brother got me reading comics by, well, giving me some of his to read; probably the only nice thing he ever did for me! I guess if I'd have to go to a particular series that jump-started my collecting career, it'd be Avengers.

My dad got me into it. I'd read a comic here or there before sixth grade but I was really into baseball cards. The baseball card shop in my small Kentucky town also sold comics. So one time when my dad had taken me there--he bought about 12 consecutive issues of IRON MAN. It was the Armor Wars II Mandarin/Fin Fang Foom stuff by John Byrne and John Romita Jr. He had been a huge fan of The Metal Men when he was a kid and he thought IRON MAN was a modern offshoot of that book. I stumbled onto those books and next time I went into that store... I bought some comics with my baseball cards.

If there's still time I'd like you to warn the TWD characters taking the van to look for the...place with more weaponry, that even if they Do find it they might not have a prison to come back to! And the Woodbury guys already are searching and have their weapons. Funny that Walking Dead and JLA Classified have the exact same issue count, huh? Both at #37. Funnier still, they're making a big deal out of Carlos D'Anda and Kid Amazo.

There was a wedding this issue. The priest-guy.. Rick?..even read from the Bible. I guess you do that at weddings. Most religious thing I've seen in this book ever. In the flashback at the beginning--I Think it was a flashback--Shane and Lori were talking about the government? Was that b4 the plague (or whatever) had spread too badly, or what? It occurs to me that no actual zombies, or walking dead guys, were used this issue!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

The flashback in issue 37 continued from the flashback in issue 7. So it was during the time Rick was in a coma, but after the zombie plague had started.

Robert, (is "Ye, Gods" played out?)

I recently fired off an email to Invincible (LOVE IT), and now, after having just read #37 of TWD, I'm sending one here. I used to write letters to comics when I was younger, but none were ever printed; however, due to the fact that you print more letters than anyone I've ever seen--and, that you answer them yourself--there was an incentive for me to sit at my computer and try again.

You're in luck. I'm thinking about printing your letter.

I'm 36 years old and have been a comic collector since the age of 12/13. Although I did get into the traditional superhero stuff e.g. Daredevil, Spider-man, etc. I also liked darker, more mysterious material, as well. When Frank Miller did his run on Daredevil with Mazzuchelli, it appealed to me so much more than the ad nauseum repetitions of a new super villain every issue with no true feeling of consequence. These days, titles like Sin City, 100 bullets, Criminal, etc. jazz me up a lot more than crossover after crossover of mindless men-in-tights drivel. This love for more adult oriented storytelling, combined with my love for horror movies and great advice from 2 wise, wise men (what's up, Neil and Chris!!) brought me to TWD.

I'd love to go on and on about how much fun I have reading this book, Robert, but it's nothing you haven't heard before. What I would like to address briefly is my continued hope that you will NEVER, EVER pull any punches or tame your material down because a bunch of sissy-boys might get offended or some sanctimonious pseudo-intellectual might send you some whiny screed on how this or that is a reflection of societal oppression blah, blah, blah. I'm referring, of course, to some of the reactions you got to your depiction of the whole Governor/Michonne situation. Especially, when some people tried to speak for your inner thoughts and beliefs, particularly by accusing you of being sexist/racist. I'm impressed by how you handled those letters by not collapsing into a heap of jelly and defending your story. This is a cruel world--both in the real world and, especially, in the TWD one--and bad things happen. It's unfortunately symptomatic of our PC society to label anything perceived as negative towards certain individuals/groups as racist, etc. Not to overstate it, but how dare they pretend to know what you think, Robert, or, for that matter, what the rest of us do!

Anyways, I've got so much more to say to praise the unbelievable work that you, Charlie, Cliff and Rus are doing on this title, but I'd like to get printed, so here are some numbered questions:

I do print some letters that don't have questions... I swear.

1. Is Charlie as amped about doing this book forever as you yourself are? Man, I hope so. His artwork is EXACTLY how this book needs to look!

I wouldn't say he's as amped as me, but he's definitely on board for the long haul. I know he enjoys it but I wouldn't presume to have him on board for life. He's not going anywhere any time soon.

2. For the first time, in issue #37, we got somewhat of a flashback with Lori thinking about Shane. Does this mean you may use flashbacks to give us--FINALLY--some backstory on characters like Michonne? We're dying to read it, man!

The first flashback was actually at the beginning of issue 7. This is the second. I don't plan on using them too often but maybe every now and then--and only when the event ties in with what I've got going on in the main story.

3. In the interview at the back of #37, you mentioned that at the beginning you had the story mapped out up to its current position. Do you have the next 37 more or less figured out?

Oh, yeah. Definitely. There is also stuff that would be taking place way after this stuff happening now that I had planned in the beginning. It was a very rough outline but I always knew I was leading up to this stuff. And y'know, since then I've been plotting further and further ahead as I go along... of course--there's still stuff I always make up on the fly while I'm writing... it keeps things fresh.

4. Will Carl ever take his hat off? Dale, I understand, because it designates him clearly as "Dale", but Carl?

He takes it off from time to time.

5. Can you promise us loyal readers that you will tell the story you want to tell for us grown-ups here, and not balk at showing terrible things? I know you haven't yet, but I hope the whole tempest over the torture thing hasn't left you gun-shy.

Trust me, there's more to come on that front. By the time we reach issue 50 it'll be clear that I'm not pulling any punches.

Thank you for your time and for doing your part to keep comics a legitimate medium!

By the way, I also love the Ant-man title and anxiously look forward to The Wolf-man!!

Jonathan Radmer

Yay, The Irredeemable Ant-Man and The Astounding Wolf-Man! Very cool, thanks for reading.

Kirkman--

Issue #37! Yay!

Yay-fuckin'-yay-yay! Really beautiful work, all around.

QUESTION! Do all the character moments get written

at the same speed as the plot-driven stuff? Or do they accrue over time?

Good stuff,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Hm. Well, the issues themselves in script form get written chronologically almost as you would read it. I start on page one and write until I'm on page 22 but before that there's a plot stage where I map everything out on paper. The character stuff is scrawled out in notes and sometimes things get shifted back into another issue to save space or so I can lead up to a moment. The plot stuff and the character stuff is more often than not just written at the same time as I go along. Does that explain it at all?

It would be very cool if you guys decide to include a poster in one of the upcoming issues.

I really want one.

Good job guys, this comic is great!

Jose Pinal

Well, there's not a poster contained in this issue, but there IS an ad for one. You'll find it shortly after this letters column. You can buy it in whatever store you purchased this comic. Tell them Dave sent you!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am writing this to let you know that I love this book. I just recently got on board and started with the trades and quickly got caught up so now I'm up to issue 37. This series is one of the best out there! I think one of the better sequences I've read thus far is the one with Rick questioning his humanity after he killed Martinez who was essentially spying for the governor and his bitches. I loved it and it spoke to me. I could conceive of myself, put in a similar situation, doing the exact same thing for my family. Making those choices wouldn't be so tough once you put it in perspective.

I also have a gripe to pick with all those people who wrote in and complained about the extended torture scene with Michonne. I don't get what they are upset about at all. The book is called The Walking Dead not The Walking Unliving Enjoying Lunch In Your Garden. **(but maybe it should be? -Robert)** First and foremost this is a zombie book by the title alone. One should expect all the violence and agony that goes into something like that. And like you said, if people get turned off by one book then what's that say about them? I myself loved the torture scene and I felt it was very gratifying in every respect. You made the governor a complete prick and we, well most of us, wanted to see that extended torture scene to see him get his comeuppance. I feel that those people who wrote in complaining about it are part of the conservative America that I despise. I mean come on, if pushing the boundaries with some sex scenes isn't going to set off alarms with these people why should a torture scene? The way I see it is it's hypocritical of them. Comic artists and writers have been fighting the good fight for freedom of expression for a long time and you can't get your panties in a bunch with a title such as this if you have a problem with a little violence. I say keep up the good work and giving us great stories month in and month out.

Well, in defense of the people who balked at the horror... this series, according to the sales figures, is reaching a pretty broad audience. I've gotten mail from people who just read Marvel books who have given this title a shot. So, we're not ALL horror fans here, who are used to seeing and hearing far worse than what's portrayed here in our favorite movies.

And that's okay. I'd like this book to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. And it's COOL that stuff in this book can make people flinch and respond so strongly. Doesn't mean I'm going to quit doing such things, just to appease those fans... just like I'm not going to put in more gore and more zombie action just to appease those fans.

This book is what it is, and really, the most important member of the audience is myself. Meaning, if I don't like it, I can't write it... so thus far I've just been doing what interests ME at whatever given moment and I'll probably just continue doing that, because that keeps me interested in the series and keeps me interested in writing scripts.

Keeping Charlie interested isn't a bad thing either, but I think I'm doing that as well.

So anyway, I don't mind the crazy response from fans. At the end of the day, it just means people are vested in the series and sucked into the story enough to garner a reaction... and really, that's more than I could have ever hoped for with this book. So it's all good.

That said, to reiterate about the interactions with Rick, Tyreese, and everyone else there it's just pure magic. I read these books now to see what happens next to these people because you've made me care about them. The zombies are an afterthought almost, because the real drama is what's happening behind those walls.

Heh--some issues they're certainly an afterthought for me!

Thanks again for taking the time to read this and I can't wait to see what Lori tells Rick in 38! I've got goosebumps already!

Sincerely,
Gabriel

Well, I hope it went the way you DIDN'T expect it to. Thanks for writing.

That's all the time we have here at Letter Hacks central. Be on the lookout yesterday for issue 41. We're incorporating brand new time machine technology to get you that issue BEFORE this one. This time I swear! We're on time, baby!!

Sigh.

See you next issue.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

And here we are at issue 41. I'm preparing for San Diego, the big Comic-Con International and I'm trying to make sure this issue goes to the printer before I leave... so, y'know... no time for the chatty chat.

So let's dive into the letters!

Wee! (probably not all that appropriate after the end of this issue, but y'know, whatever).

Greetings Kirkland,
I've been keeping up with the walking dead since issue one, never read any of your other stuff. However as a 29 year old black male there are some concerns I have with your writing.... I'm concerned that you re going to let all these outside opinions about you being "Racist" affect the writing of the greatest zombie comic ever written. I'm proud of my black heritage, but I honestly felt that the events that happened to Michonne in issue 29 were not the result of a racist writer, but in actuality was the fucked up hand survivors get dealt in a world full of cut throats and zombies. I was horrified by what happened to homegirl in issue 29 but it only made the book a more intense read. (besides Rick is missing a hand, that's pretty brutal, too.) I consider your book an entertaining glimpse into a world of "Survival Horror" I don't relate to any of the characters any more or less because their race. I look at how well each character can adapt to the situations they are confronted with. I read the angry letters in issue 35 and although the whole "chocolate rape fantasy" accusations were funny, don't lose any sleep over it, man.

The Walking Dead is hands down the best zombie comic I've ever read. Please don't let your team get all soft over a few angry fans. You have the support and \$2.99 of this BLACK man every time I hit the comic shop.

One of your biggest and BLACKEST fans,

G. Washington

Thanks so much for the words of encouragement. I know I've said this many times over the last few letters columns, but again, there's no worry of me curbing my plans to appease the fan mail. I'm just doing what I want. It's what I've been doing since the beginning and the book is doing very well, so I don't have any plans to change the way I do things now.

Dear Robert,

My name is Martín Casanova, and I'm from Argentina. Before Marvel Zombies, I hadn't read anything from you, and that mini-series was a pleasant surprise. I don't think of myself as a zombie fan, but I loved "28 days later..." and "Shaun of the Dead".

I've been a comic book fan since 1989 (yeah, *that* Tim Burton movie...) and nowadays I have my own Buenos Aires based comic book company. It's just taking off, but we had 600 people at our last graphic novel presentation, and that's really promising, right?

Anyway, I just finished reading the first 33 issues of The Walking Dead *in two days* and I'm simply hooked. *I love it*. And reading it from a publisher point of view, I can't help but wonder "Why haven't I thought of this?". The book is a fun read, it's well written, and you never know what's coming next. It reminds me of the best Preacher issues. Oh, and the artwork is just amazing.

I think I'm three or four issues behind, but I don't know what it'll be like waiting 30 days to get the following chapter... While I read it, I thought it'd do a great live action series. If they let Nip/Tuck get away with all the gross operations...

Congratulations on a great book that is enjoyable anywhere in the world.

Best regards,
Martín Casanova

Glad you liked it, thanks for writing.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Well, first off let me start by giving a huge CONGRATS on joining the parenting world, I hope you both enjoy every up and down as much as I do.

Okay with that said...

I have decided to finally write once and for all....

I will begin with a little info about myself, I am a 28 year old single mother....

I became addicted to TWD since I came across the first issue, and I still am a huge fan, and although I am not some goth girl I have been horribly obsessed with zombies since I was a kid....actually I am in the middle of writing my own take on it....but that's another letter....I have to say yours has been one of my favorite storylines in this genre....with that said

I just wanted to point out that since the whole

brew-ha-ha over the Michonne ordeal and torture of the gov and all....

Well I have noticed almost if not every printed letter was written by a guy.....

That is true, I don't always read the names of the letter writers, so it's not something I notice unless it's in the body of the email. But yeah, it seems we've got a largely male fan base here on the book. I try to print all the letters from women just to try and even things out.

Now I am not some crazy bra burning man hating type of gal....

I just thought it might be a nice change to see what a woman thinks about it....

So here it goes....

I myself relate very personally with what Michonne went through in the comic....and to be honest I was hoping for more brutality against that douche bag.

I have read all sorts of things about this and yes it is probably a dead (no pun intended) subject but I just had to write...

Don't worry... the way things are going it may never die...

First off let's start by saying that if anyone thinks it was racist...well....that is utterly absurd.....mainly due to the fact that Michonne is the most bad ass out of all the women, and with that..... she was the only female character strong enough to pull through such an awful situation and fight back for herself...she actually epitomizes the term strong black woman....a lesser woman would have died.....or ratted out the others.... so let's just let that issue go shall we....if it is racist to have 3 of most interesting and strong characters be african-american....than I suppose I am confused about what racist means.

Second,rape yes is very ugly and scary and it is a million times worse in "real" life....and unfortunately it may happen to someone if one day zombies were to take over the world, and the living consequently were forced into a post-apocalyptic mad max survival type of world...but what is scarier is that it happens everyday...

Instead of writing nasty hate mail to the author of a fictional comic character maybe it would suit those people more to put their efforts and voices towards a different aspect of society that may deal with "real" people that were "really" raped....

The sad fact is that stuff goes on every single flipping day, and you don't see people getting all pissed off about it....and why?

Because they don't see it, it is just some far away idea....well I am so sorry that while you were reading your comic about the walking dead, with images of god knows how many different types of violence and gore, you were offended by the image of a woman being raped.....sorry to burst your bubble, and that you had to find out the world isn't a safe candy filled land with smiling unicorns and caramel filled chocolate trees..... welcome to the human fucking race and thanks for finally joining the group....oh and why not be a bit more creeped out about the people who were just a bit too eager to show how much they enjoyed that scene....

And to the persons who thought the torture was too brutal....ugh, the f*cker deserved way worse, and I wish it would have been the whole issue....but that is just me....

Maybe it would happen less in real life if someone was faced with getting horribly mutilated and tortured..... but who cares about that.... just continue on along ranting about a fictional world while the real one around you burns...but I suppose that now includes me and I am a hypocrite.....but at least I notice it and admit it.....and getting over the denial is the hardest part.

So here's to you Mr. Kirkman....keep writing intriguing storylines.....and shocking the shit out of people... it may be the only time they will ever recognize the world around them and not look away....

I will continue to buy your comics and be a huge fan.....I sure do hope you print this....although I doubt they will since it is so long....but hell if you cut out the profanities and most of the subject matter perhaps it will be more tolerable in print.....and it would just be freaking cool as hell to see my name in my favorite comic.....congrats again on the little one...

Sincerely,
Karith Cashion

Oh, we love long letters here at Letter Hack's central. And don't mind the profanity, we're all about that too. Thanks for taking the time to write.

YO Robert,

Chiming in late about the story with Michonne, I reserved judgment until the story concluded unlike many of these bleeding hearts who just immediately lashed out at you for your story then "dropped your book" (morons). A story with a STRONG BLACK WOMAN (god forbid) who came back from the bad place she was in and then kicked the ass of her attacker (Go Michonne). What did people expect from a HORROR comic, fuzzy bunnies and easter baskets?! Screw that! keep the F'D up stories coming Kirkman, that's what I at least expect from a HORROR comic with ADULT themes. Your doing a kick ass job considering the number of titles you write every month. Until the Aliens show up a hundred issues from now MAKE. MINE. KIRKMAN. Invincible, Walking Dead, Ultimate X-Men! What am I missing? I know you're writing more.

Matt McIntyre

Irredeemable Ant-Man (for a few more issues at least), Marvel Zombies, The Astounding Wolf-Man and a few things that are yet to be announced. I like to keep busy.

Man... I hope things go back to normal with the mail soon. I really, REALLY appreciate the support but it does start to feel like I'm getting the same letter over and over.

Dear TWD,
I have to start by saying that this comic has completely amazed me. I've never been into comics let alone collecting them but since I started reading TWD I've done little else. What originally attracted me to this comic was Tony Moore, I've been a big fan of his in

the last year or so and had slowly started checking into comics he was involved with when I discovered TWD. Since I bought my first issue about three months ago I haven't stopped purchasing anything with its title attached to it. I want to let everyone involved with this comic know that it is pure perfection from start to finish, with a captivating story that keeps you on the edge of your seat every issue to the amazing illustrations. I would also like you to know that I love the letter hacks, I do, in fact, read each and everyone. The questions that your fans write in about are great most of the time and I love the fact that you take the time to write responses. Thank you Mr. Kirkman and everyone else involved with the creation and or printing of this amazing story.

Your appreciative fan
Josh Hart

Well, sir, thanks so much for the far-to-kind words. It's always good to hear about people picking up the book and really liking it. It's good to know there are some people here to replace all the people who are quitting the book due to all the violence and racism.

As a employee of Wal-mart, laughed my butt off when they got busted looting Wa-mart!!!!Thanks for the book!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

Hey--I used to work at Wal-Mart, too! We can be Wal-Mart buddies! I mean, ahem--we can be Wal-Mart buddies!!!!!!!! (better?)

Hey

I've been itching to write a letter to you for some time but I've never really had too much to say other than praise/questions and where would that get us ...nowhere.

I try to read the letter columns as much as possible (I might pick up something I didn't already know). Then I read in geek how much of your time it eats up .

I wanted to say I love the columns 38 was awesome due to the numb skull talking about T&A and Religion (funny stuff). Anyways I thought I would tell you I think you're a lucky bastard to go from reading comics, to working at a store, to doing your thing with Funk-O-Tron, Image, and now working for marvel in such a short time (dream come true, right?). What's marvel got you slated for next ?

A few things, but nothing I can talk about right now. It really is a dream come true. I mean, this is what I wanted to do as a kid and I'm doing it and making a decent living at it. It just doesn't get any better than this. I'm very content. And as far as the letters columns go, I do like doing them, but they are a bit of a pain in the ass, they take a bunch of time.

Have you ever seen a move about the rapture from the 70's or 80's involving tattoos of the mark of the beast and it ending were the believers were cast out of the community and died of starvation? Total ridiculous and from my childhood but I can't find anything about it (like a name) it never hurts to ask right?

Envied by,
Ed Kelsey

Hm, I don't know what movie that is... but I'm interested. Can anyone else help us out? Please?

P.S. How big of a bite did you swallow to reprint 35?

Well, quite a big one. It took my cut of the profits from 35 and part of 36 to cover the printing bill on the corrected version of 35. It's my own damn fault though... I should have looked at those proofs. It kills me that it's the only time in the history of me doing comics that I've forgotten to look over the proofs... and a page got duplicated. I mean--what are the odds. So I basically wrote 35 for free and wrote 36 at a discount. But really, it was worth it to not have to put up with a misprinted book being out there. And the messed up issue 35 repeated page 21 where 22 should have been... so there was no cliffhanger, the whole ending was blown. There was no way I could let that go out.

Live and learn.

Robert Kirkman!

Just finished #38, Letter Hacks and all. It made me come and piss and shit myself, all at the same time, while still keeping the comic in near mint condition (9.2). So two weeks until #39, huh? I'll believe it when I see it. But it's always worth the wait. In #38, what's up with the old long haired fella's overuse of the phrase, "You follow me?" Perhaps he's overused it before, and I just hadn't noticed.

Maybe Axel says more than usual in 38 but he says that after almost every line of dialogue he's ever spoken. It's a personality tick, something he's done for as long as he's been in the book. Check back, you'll see.

Race was a big issue in #38's Hacks. I guess it's a big issue anywhere. Would you allow me to comment on the subject?

At least you asked first... I'm a bit sick of the subject, but go ahead.

If so, here's my comment!

As I understand big boy capital "S" Science, everyone is ultimately descended from folk who came from Africa. Google that shit if you don't believe me, each and every human being on this planet comes from one black man and one black woman. Different skin color, different hair color, stuff termed "racial characteristics" by one ass or another, is the result of evolution, human beings adapting to different climates and environments, and shit. That's why the mole-men are so pale and have such big eyes.

My creationist background argues a bit with your theory... and I've seen some paintings of Adam and Eve... and heck for that matter Jesus himself that go against your argument. **joking**

So we're all the same race, is basically what Science has uncovered here. Everything else is just cultural, different cultures conflicting for whatever reasons different cultures conflict. And that shit could be dealt with, so easy. Does the problem lie with the unwashed masses or the washed controllers of the masses? In the end, both master and slave castes, each and every one of us that is, are all trapped in some perverse geo-social realpolitik gangbang, forced to service an invisible partner who welds an iron three-pronged prick. That's what I think, anyway.

Wow... the discussion kinda ramped up there for a bit, eh?

What's with not using thought balloons or captions? Cinematic effect? I wonder how many people besides me had no idea it was June, 2004, TWD time, until you said it in a response to an email. I'm not saying you should denote the passage of time → having the characters and the readers unaware of exactly how much time has passed makes both groups disoriented and contributes to the suspense. But it is nice to have a frame of reference, I'm glad you let us in on that shit.

Well, it's not really important to the story and I really don't keep too close of an eye on it. So a running tally would just be a pain in my ass to keep track of.

You said you'd hook up anybody with a proper copy for the #35 misprint variant. Howsabout hookin' me up with the misprint in exchange for the regular one? And www.mycomicshop.com totally rules. Word.

I've only got like two or three of them myself... sorry. I've got none to spare.

Godboy Andrew J. Shaw wondered why no God in TWD. In my humblest opinion, I think after a zombie apocalypse, most everyone would wise up real quick to what's really going down with the whole bearded dude in the sky thing. It is my contention that one should not pander to the religious set anymore than one should pander to the people with what should be considered cultural hang-ups.

Aside from my more than likely inappropriate joke earlier I really don't want to get into a huge religious debate. Living in Kentucky some of my closest friends are religious and I believe their faith would very much survive this type of situation. And there's nothing wrong with that. I believe that was touched on a bit in this very issue.

Presumptuousness Dept.: If you like Nick Cave you should check out Will Oldham's Bonnie Prince Billie stuff; you've probably heard it already but if you haven't, there you go. "I See A Darkness" is the best, I think. Do you watch any soap operas? "As the World Turns" is fun stuff.

Only "Passions" whenever I catch it on TV... that shit is INSANE!

Alright, man, Letter Hacks rules, the comic rules, everything totally rules.

Rev. Occulto

Thanks for writing.

Dear Robert (Bohab) Kirkman,

This comic is the sweetness. I had never picked up a comic in my 20 years until I happened to see that there was a George Ramono'ish zombie comic book out and that it was freaking awesome. Since then I have indulged in many different comics and have opened up to many different genre's of comic book. I have bought every single issue and trade and have both hardbound copies out because I want to see this book go beyond its 100th issue (which should be an extra spectacular double sized anniversary issue). But I got a favor to ask... please put me in one of the issues letter sections! Just a name in some random spot. It would be sweet to see my name in the comic book that got me into to comic books. Oh Yeah, and those people that say you're too edgy with your work and that you are racist... they're scared because they would be the first

to go in the zombie holocaust.

Your fan till the apocalypse,
Matthew Barker

Consider your request honored. Call my silly, but I kinda like the idea of The Walking Dead not really having anniversary issues per se. Issue 25 was a major turning point but not double-sized or special in any other way. Issue 50 will be the same way. Maybe... MAYBE when we make it to 100 we'll go all out... but really, I'm kinda against it at this point.

Dear Robert Kirkman

I have been reading the walking dead since it started (i forgot how many years ago).

Four years this October. Yes, we will have done 43 issues in 4 years. So we missed 5 months... in FOUR YEARS. Not bad for an independent comic... and I really honestly think that may be the best record for an independent comic out there... most definitely way up there.

I am a big zombie fan I read your marvel zombies collection and I thought that was a masterpiece man. You were my inspiration for my play Not Another Zombie Outbreak (I am only 16 years old). It was a smash hit at my school and it won an award for best One act play. You are the man with the plan when it comes to Zombies dude. I will follow you until you stop writing the Walking Dead (I'm not trying to sound like a stalker). also keep writing for Marvel, you add that little spice to them I haven't seen in a while. Keep up the good work and I hope you are honored that you are my inspiration.

Your fanboy
Zack Lippy aka Farmer Joe

I am so honored that I have inspired... Zippy Lippy, aka Farmer Joe.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

One of these issues, when someone shoots at a zombie, it's gonna turn out to be some dude with a hangover walking funny; I would love to see that!

So you're really an atheist, huh... or was that a Pagan? Sorry, I always get those two confused. I don't think it'll stop me reading your books, well except one... the one that got canceled. I actually thought that 'Irredeemable' was just hitting it's stride! But any way you sugar coat it: it's still Ant-Man, so. Everyone knows that Kirkman should be writing Spider-Man or the Incredible Hulk or Wolverine Origins anyway, right?

You're starting to win me over... but really, there's a huge difference between Pagans and Atheists, you should do some research, my friend.

I am getting to know the characters names a bit more now, after over a year of consecutive reading or so. I guess I can understand the whole Gilligan's Island/ Scooby-Doo approach of not using last names, especially with such a large cast; just make sure you use the first names a bit more.

I'll do my best, Andrew.

Had a letter printed in issue #38; you didn't bother to tell me...us...how a zombie is created, just that it's not

through biting. Are we ever gonna discover why some people were affected by the.zombification, and others not?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

I don't really remember showing anyone who isn't affected by the zombification. Basically, the rule is: WHATEVER it is that causes the zombies, is something everyone already has. If you stub your toe, get an infection and die... you turn into a zombie. UNLESS your brain is damaged. If someone shoots you in the head and you die... you're dead. A zombie bite kills you because of infection, or blood loss... not because of the zombie "virus." Make sense?

And please (I worry that the next six letters columns will be about religion) don't take the Atheist thing too harshly. I've got nothing against religion, I think it's swell, I just personally don't buy it. I try to display a fair portrayal of it in the book... and I'll probably delve a little deeper into it with coming issues.

Hey Robert Kirkman!

Egads! I've been found!

I would like to take this time to respond to Mr. John W who's letter made print in issue # 37 of TWD, found the zombie on the top of page 2 in TWD #35 a little conspicuous.

Yup. It's me. Charlie was gracious enough to help me with my little campaign to become "a glorified comic book extra". A most awesome moment appearing in a most awesome book. Thanks again.

And Robert, this isn't the first time I've snuck my way into your books. I'd like to draw your attention to page 2 in Invincible #37. Ah HA! "One please".

Hopefully, plans are I'll be making it into another of your books creating a "Kirkman Trifecta!".

I hope all the books I buy get your child through college. Thanks for making comics a great hobby, and Charlie, thanks for making me a part of that hobby.

Sincerely,
Jeff J

Yeah, sure man... that zombie is you. Likely story. You're going to get everyone and their brother emailing Charlie to ask him to draw them in the book--and that's no good. Shame on you Jeff J... SHAME!

Sir,

Please feel free to skip this first bit, it's nothing but the usual: love The Walking Dead, excellent job, first time writing to a comic, keep it up!

I'm only going to say one thing about the continual controversy over the Michonne rape that has really been done to death, and that is that I think it's a positive thing that a comic can generate such discourse. Genuine reader reaction and debate over issues highlighted is always good to see, so I'd take it as a generally positive thing.

I really do. I know I've been complaining a bit

about it in the letters column as of late (mostly in jest) but I do think it's great that people care deeply enough to write in, whether it be positive or negative.

Anyhow, on to the real reasons for writing. I've been a huge fan of the series for a while now, however reading Issue 38 I was suddenly struck by two things:

Rick knows that the child isn't his. Now this in itself isn't a huge revelation, but it was that I cared; and I suddenly realized that you've managed to trick me into watching some zombie apocalyptic version of Eastenders (a British soap if it's not know over there, which I hope it isn't). I don't know if that's a good thing or not, but for once I find myself caring about such things in a plot, which is disturbing in itself. I suppose it does also mean I'd start watching Eastenders too if they worked in a zombie outbreak at some point, but then when wouldn't a film or TV show be drastically improved by the addition of zombies to some extent?

I agree. Sorry to slip in a bit of soap opera... but really, aren't all comics just soap operas for boys. It's all about relationships and human interaction if you look past the explosions, fighting and zombies... just admit it. "Oh, man... I sure do hope Peter and Mary Jane kiss this issue!" We're all girls.

Secondly, a slight grumble, sorry. Towards the end of the issue I found myself thinking "Oh, we're running out of pages, must be a cliffhanger soon. In the supermarket near Woodbury, I know a bunch of Woodbury guys will turn up." Unsurprisingly, over the page the same happens. Obviously I know why you employ such devices at the end of each issue, and I'm sure it makes a lot of sense. I just on occasion find them a little stilted; especially when they are quickly resolved and everything is 'reset' to default afterwards. Regardless, a very minor point on what is by far the best comic book going. It's not as if I expect you to stop doing it. I don't know, I just felt the need to point it out for some reason.

Well the intent is for them to not be stilted and I try not to quickly reset to default afterwards... I'll try to work harder at it. I think the "cliffhangers for the last few issues have been a bit of a change of pace... and I hope the one at the end of this issue came as at least a SMALL shock.

Anyway, keep up the excellent work. It is genuinely refreshing to have such an original, thrilling and intelligent work in any medium, but especially comics. Don't ever let the series stop.

Yours Sincerely,
Paul Hunting

I'll do my best to keep it up, as will Mistrs Adlard, Rathburn and Wooton. The best is yet to come!

And with that, I gotta wrap things up. The wife and I gotta watch Sex and the City dvds. (Research for an upcoming arc.)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

As I type type this, my friend Mike Wieringo has been dead for three days.

I've sat here for almost an hour, typing and retyping some bullshit text piece about what Mike meant to me and it just comes off like I'm sitting here trying to prove that I knew the guy. Mike and I had a lot of conversations over the last four years since I met him that I will always cherish. Mike was a great guy and I'm so goddamned pissed that I'll never get to talk to him or see a new piece of art from him that I'm really just not in the mood to do a letters column. I don't think he ever knew how much he meant to me or how much he meant to everyone.

I'll miss you, Mike.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Best issue ever, folks!

I like that Robert thought this was going to be poorly received, but if you come back in three weeks for Walking Dead Weekly 46, you'll see otherwise! At any rate, let's look at some vintage letters!

-Sina Grace

Well, here we are with issue 43.

Yeah, this is the flashback issue. I'm thinking I might get some complaints for this issue (and I'm prepared, fuckers! Bring it on!) but there is some very important stuff being touched on in the issue, stuff that will be used later in the series, that is important to show.

I chose to do this issue this way, instead of telling the governor's story along the way as a subplot in the previous issues because that would pretty much kill any impact his attack on the prison would have.

I think it worked out, but I do understand that two issues in a row have ended at the exact same moment and that makes it seem like there's been no progression this issue... well, I promise it will be worth it in the long run.

Also, before anyone complains about the reused pages... this issue has the exact same amount of new pages as any other issue has. The reused pages are EXTRA. This issue is longer than usual issues.

Now--enough of that. Let's get some mail answered.

Kirkman,

I felt really bad for Rick. He should be able to bask in the joy of his new baby girl, but he has to saw off Dale's foot.

I thought this issue was going to be lighter in tone due to the baby's arrival, but this is one dark tale.

1. It looked like Dale was jealous over Andrea and Tyreese's interaction. Am I wrong?

You were right--and this has been pretty much resolved already.

2. When are you going to flesh out Axel's character? You follow me?

Soon, unless he dies.

On page 19 at the top, Tyreese has his shirt off, then in the last panel he has his shirt on. On page 20 Tyreese doesn't have his shirt on anymore. Is he really that indecisive on a hot day?

Yes, Charlie Adlard knows Tyreese inside and out, he knows what makes him tick... he knows when he wears a shirt and when he doesn't. Sometimes the change is quite sudden but that's just how Tyreese is.

Your upcoming issues' teaser "No One Is Safe" has me scared for Rick. This means that you're doing your job.

Sophea Uk

Thanks, lady... I'm trying.

Mr. Kirkman,

I appreciate you printing my letter in issue 39. I thought it might have delved into areas that were too deep to print, but I respect your allowing your readers to have their say no matter how far they go with their statements. I'm writing in now to clarify something I said that you took in a very negative way. I made a reference to Middle Eastern people that you took out of context, and I just wanted to explain it for you and anyone else who may write in thinking I'm some backwater redneck with a pessimistic view toward his fellow man. Specifically, I said that it would be more likely for a racist person to pleasure himself to an image of a Middle Eastern woman being violated rather than Michonne given the state of today's society following 9-11. You got the intended shock value of the statement and spoke up, but I don't think the point got through in the way I intended. You said that there are a fair share of sickos in this world, but they are few and far between. The statement I made was directed at those few and far between sickos and not society as a whole. The sad thing is that those few and far between sickos tend to get more press coverage than the average citizen, the kind of press coverage Charles L. tried to garnish with his own statements because, let's face it, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, so the Middle Eastern reference was intended to target those individuals and to reflect on the ignorance of some statements on the other side of the argument. My exact words were that I had more belief in the "possibility" of that among those sickos than what Charles L. attempted to pass off as the "honest truth" of a larger group of people in society. Simply put, his statement was nothing more than propaganda, and I wanted to say something equally shocking to counter it on a social level. I went through every stage of emotion in that letter. Perhaps the Middle Eastern reference was an ill-conceived comparison for the point I was trying to make, but I won't apologize to anyone who took my statements the wrong way... because you took them the wrong way and have no need to be offended, just as I believe no black person should be

offended by what happened to Michonne based simply on the color of her skin. Still, I wanted to set the record straight that I do have faith in my fellow man and society, and I have nothing but hope for an end

to this sad affair known as racism because the word itself has started to mutate into areas that frankly do not apply to the definition.

I'll admit freely that I am a "backwater redneck" of above-average intelligence and deep philosophies that may go in some weird directions that need to change for the better of my understanding of my peers, and I don't claim to know or understand everything even on the subject of racism. Those are simple facts given my birthplace and upbringing that have shaped my attitude. I'm sure there are things I never will understand, but I consider one thing an ultimate truth: everyone is racist, and anyone who says they are not is lying either to themselves or to their peers. I come from a family background of long-standing racism, but I have fought my elder relatives to instill an opposing viewpoint that we are all equal as human beings regardless even of constant reminders that some of us are of a particular skin color, nationality, or intelligence bracket. When I look at an individual, despite any nagging racism or preconceived notion in the back of my soul that I fight off with a passion, I do my damndest to see only the good in that person no matter what they do, even if the person is a criminal or a comic book villain. I think your book, with its severe global disaster, is a good example of just how equal we all are as human beings and should be a testament of how all people can work together and relate on a colorless level. The fact that it's in black and white accentuates this, I think, but even that can't force some deep-seated people to be colorblind long enough to see the point. I try my best to advocate equality, but I'm only human and just as prone to mistakes in my opinions as anyone else. When people take those mistakes at more than face value and don't try to help one another understand rather than calling one another ignorant, then that is when the senseless bickering starts, and people forget that ignorance has a cure.

My point, in essence, was that Michonne gave me a completely opposite image compared to what she gave Charles L. and others who complained. I think Michonne's situation compares in terms of literature to The Color Purple. It is much more graphic and traumatic than the spousal abuse of the novel, but I believe that its ramifications carry a similar message of the strength of an oppressed person. I think those who complained looked only at the visual brutality of the act, and they may do well to look deeper. Acting on aesthetics alone seems to lead to the bleakest of arguments, and that is what we have here. Additionally, I agree with your rebuttal that reverse racism is subtle and not really an issue. I only wanted to state that it exists on the spectrum, and for the last several years I have seen a trend of black-on-black racism that tops it fairly easily. Case in point, the opinion among some that Barack Obama isn't really "black" because he isn't descended from slaves. We strive for equality, and yet we continue to create more labels to segregate ourselves even from our own groups.

On that note, I will fade back into the ether and return to my role as a spectator. I won't ever stop reading, but writing in (on this subject at least) goes too far afield. I may drop a line for general kudos, but I'm leaving this subject alone from here on out. This argument and racism as a whole just need to die off. Maybe the aliens need to land or the zombies need to rise up in this world so that we can work it out once and for all... or simply confuse the matter so much that no one even wants to touch it anymore (I think we're there already). Peace, in EVERY way possible for EVERY living being on the planet... may we reach that someday at the end of this rough road. Come on, people now. Smile on your brother, and all that 60s hippie crap. The words really do mean something once you get past the tone of the decade and all the psychedelic colors.

Sincerely,
Aaron Conway

Sorry if I misunderstood the meaning of what you said. I've given you a chance to say your piece here in print as an apology.

I was surprised that there was no expansion of the fact that Billy just ran and left Dale being chewed on by the zombie. Dale was unconscious when Billy ran, but he must have remembered he was out there with the guy and wondered why he had to crawl away from the zombie himself and why wasn't Billy helping him or looking for him.

Drew Peabody.

Billy ran out of fear--it all happened quickly. Dale doesn't hold it against him. Dale looks at Billy as a child, making a child's mistake.

First things first, I love this comic series! I really do! You're doing it in a very different way from the other zombie tales out there ---you're allowing the story to be the main focal point, not the undead. And that takes guts. And that's also what makes you different --- and in my opinion, better--- from the rest!

It's easy to hack and slash (and that's important to have in a horror comic, uh, I mean, "Survivalist Adventure" ---btw, love the term!) but when you make the zombies the thing that drives the comic it gets old fast. But, I'm sure you know this, and that's why you haven't lost readership! I wish you guys all the success in the world and gratefully look forward to collecting the rest of this series for many years to come. It's an amazing comic!

That said, two things about this comic grate on me. (Hey, its constructive criticism... HA HA HA!) First, I've noticed that from time to time you've "recycled" images. You'll use the same drawing more than once on the page (sometimes with minor changes, like a smile added, or you'll put a hand on a shoulder for comfort,

or something like that. Sometimes, there will be no change at all.) And it sucks. It’s lazy. You shouldn’t do it. This comic kicks too much ass, to take such stupid liberties like that.

For example:

Issue #40, page 17, you use the same image twice, but with just the tiniest smile added.

Issue 37, pg 8 uses the exact same drawing twice.

Issue 6, page 10, you use the exact same image 3 times.
And again... Issue #33, page 5 you use the same image of Michonne ---3 TIMES!!

I get it that the character looks like the character, and all that, and sometimes you are trying to convey a certain mood or something, but don’t be lazy. It’s a real turn off when reading a comic. And people DO notice it. (I was chatting with some other WD fans online the other week and that was a common beef that a lot of people shared.)

What you’re referring to is commonly known as a “photo stat” or “stat” and we’ve done it just a smidge more often than the FOUR times you’ve noticed in FORTY issues. It’s a tool like any other, used to convey LACK of movement or change in a medium where there is NO MOVEMENT and it’s not something I’ll be stopping any time soon. They are scenes that are written in to the book as part of the story... not to save time, but to convey a certain action, or mood, or whatever. If Charlie were to draw the scene twice, aside from being frankly, unnecessary, it would also ruin the moment, because there would be a change. Any time you’ve seen anyone frozen in a moment of a movie or television show, stunned, scared or otherwise and they just stay there, caught in the moment... that would be a stat in a comic.

Besides... novelists use the same words over and over and over in books. Why can’t they just use new words? I’m right there with you, really... but those guys are just trying to cut corners.

Second, why are the guys and gals wasting ammo on tin cans for practice, when they could be sniping the zombies standing on the other side of the fence? The SPLAT of a zombie’s skull exploding is much more interesting than the PTING of a tin can falling over. I mean, why not thin the herd if you’re just wasting ammo? Just a friendly suggestion. (That said, why aren’t they doing shifts in the guard towers? I mean if, they know Woodbury is a threat, common sense says put sentries on duty to watch for the possibly invasion.)

Well, they must have thought the fences were their first line of defense, no need for sentries. And on the can thing, a can is a smaller, more narrow target, and would train people a little better. Later, they do go out to kill moving targets but shooting cans was a viable step toward that.

Anyway, like I said, I adore this comic and hope it has a run for MANY, MANY YEARS!!! Just thought you might want to know what one of your biggest fans is thinking. Take care and keep it interesting!

-Clay in Canada

In closing, stats are the coolest, my friend. I get a lot of pleasure spotting them in various books (they’re in virtually every comic) and noting the complexity of some. It adds an extra level to the reading experience. I hope you see things my way from now on, Clay.

I would like to start out by telling you how much I enjoy your book. The other day I told a guy on line to pick up TWD instead of that Marvel Zombies garbage and explained how much better your comic was. I put TWD dead right up there with Strangers in Paradise and Powers in how you pace the story (even when nothing “happens” there are still significant events) and keep all the participants relevant. After all that high praise I feel like a dumb ass for a few minor issues(complaints), but here goes. Where are they geographically? I know they started out in Atlanta but other than Tyreese, his daughter,Michonne, the convicts at the prison, some residents of woodbury, and the father and son in the first two issues where are the black people(You did know Atlanta was the new chocolate city?)? You don’t even show that many black zombies. As a person of color I struggle with buying books that under represent us we have been a major part of this nation since its formation and have helped shape it in every way. That leads me to my last issue (Don’t get me wrong your book is still great) you seem to be feeding the stereotype of the black males infatuation with white women(maybe unintentionally). With his relationship with Michonne stalled will Tyreese now pursue Andrea? The final panels seemed to move toward that idea. I also don’t want you to think I’m a youngster talking out off his ass (I’m 40) these are issues I have dealt with and talk to my 16 yr old son, and nephews about all the time. Thanks for another great issue and keep up the good work. P.S. Please do not let Marvel talk you into any type of cross over. Don’t Sell Out.

Christopher Crayton

What do you have against white women, Christopher? Anyway, as you can see by now, Tyreese is still very much with Michonne and he and Andrea are only friends... so no stereotype being fed here. Now, they are still in Georgia, but yeah... I guess we don’t have enough black people. Sorry about that. I’ll try to work some more in. Now, most of the residents in that area did go into the city of Atlanta and get turned into MORE zombies when the plague started... so our characters aren’t exactly from the area, so I’ve got that to use in my defense.

Also... there are a lot of black characters in this book compared to most other comics... but I don’t think that’s a good sign for my book as much as it’s just a bad sign for other books. Anyway, more black characters... request noted and logged.

Hello Robert,

Issue #40 was a great read as usual. Things are looking to be shaken up real soon and I’m really looking forward to it!

In the letter’s page of that issue, a few people had questions about how long in advance you have plotted the book. I also have a question about it. This might have been asked in a previous issue, so I apologize if I’m being redundant.

You said that the book is plotted a long ways out... do you ever find yourself straying a bit from your plans but then eventually coming back on track? As an example, I remember reading that Jeff Smith had also plotted Bone in advance, but felt there were some things that needed to be addressed as he was going. One example was the Great Cow Race. He had no intention of showing it, until he realized he really should. Are there any instances like that in Walking Dead?

Yes, a few, but I can’t mention some because they haven’t happened yet. Dexter and Andrew were originally just going to leave the prison--and not try to kick everyone out. But when I was writing issue 18, I figured “these guys wouldn’t just leave.” So I had to change the ending. Originally, Hershel was going to lose a leg, not Allen, but I decided so much bad stuff had happened to Hershel already with losing his kids and all, having him then also lose a leg would seem unrealistic... like I had it out for the guy... so Allen’s leg was lost. I also wasn’t planning on killing Allen, I loved Allen, until the issue he died in was being written. It just seemed like it needed

the extra punch of him dying... and so he died. Seemed like a good idea at the time.

Also, when is freakin’ www.kirkmania.com be live?!?!?

I’m tired of asking!!
Roch Vaillancourt

Soon... it’s actually being worked on. I think SOMETHING will be live before the end of October for sure.

Wow. I just finished Number #40! Awesome work. I enjoyed the story very much. It was a nice chang of pace from the usual Boy meets zombie, Zombie bites boy storyline. I am really glad Dale is doing well and survived the bite. I like Dale and I hope the “old geezer” sticks around for a long while. I hope the Andrea sticks with him for the long haul. Looks like she is getting a bit friendly with that young whippersnapper, Tyreese. It is just nice to see the characters have some happy times for a change.

Your writing has drawn me into the characters and their lives. I actually care about what happens to them. And that, K-man, is the mark of a great writer. Your characters are rich and full of life. I look forward to watching their lives evolve over the next 460 issues. I know at some point others will come into the scene while others move on and I know they will all draw me in to their story.

And I just feel deep in my heart that you are going to have that crazy Governor show his ugly face again. He is going to be one screwed up looking dude for sure.

Look at you, all seeing the future and stuff.

Thanks for such a wonderful story line.

And thanks for having Rick shave. Man, he was kind of skuzzy looking, dude. Lol.

Thank Charlie... he got sick of drawing facial hair.

Hey, would it be too much for a prosthetic Dr. to show up at the prison so Dale can have a false leg? Or better yet, one of those pirate peg legs. How cool would that be?

Again with the future seeing... I’m impressed.

I just looked at the CSMoore website. Says my Rick Grimes fighting a zombie statue won’t ship until around November. That’s sad. I was really looking forward to getting it this coming month. Oh, well. I’ll be patient.

I understand there was a problem with the factory in China, but it’s been resolved now... so it’ll be in your hot little hands soon enough.

Keeping on creating your worlds, Robert. You do good work.

Now, if we can just get some solar powered video consoles at the prison for Carl.....

I guess that is too much though.

Take care.
Michael Heffron
“I sit in awe of the K-man and his worlds which he creates”

Thanks for writing Michael, and for the kind, flattering words.

Lord of Comics Kirkman,

First off i love your comic. No other in the entire world matches yours or-in my opinion-ever will. After that usual kissing up on to other things.

What are you doing with Dale? Damn you he can’t die! Those poor kids have been through enough without another “father” dying. Or maybe since as told earlier it’s not the actual bite that kills you and they have a doctor now... maybe she’ll just clean the wound of bacteria and he’ll survive! Right? Right?

For now at least...

Nice going on the similarities between the Governor and Rick. Makes the story a nice warning for him. You know, if he’s not careful or if his family dies he could end up like that...

I have to say i’ve enjoyed Glenn and Maggie’s storyline more than any other in the book. if you kill one of them so help me i’ll...i’ll drop the book okay that’s a lie i’d stay even if you kiled everyone and just had zombies and aliens wandering around.

That’s good to know...

One question, why does Axel say “you follow me?” after almost everything he says? I’m not complaining i actually like it. I was just reading some back issues and noticed he says that a lot. On that note I love Axel, he should have some more page time but I’m sure you get that request a lot for all the characters...on second thought just keep doing what you’re doing, don’t change a thing.

That’s just a little personality tick to give him a unique voice. He’s like one of those guys who ends every sentence with “man.” Or something like that.

I have to say after reading some of the letters pages i have to ask why can’t people tell the difference between the characters? It’s not that hard. I think it’s quite obvious if you actually pay attention to the book your reading.

Look! I’m not commenting on Michonne’s rape! shock! gasp!

You blew it.

Anyhoo, thanks for listening to my ramblings and keep up the good work!

Jessica R.

P.S. I’m a girl. so I’ll get printed right? please? pretty please with a cherry on top? you can even edit out that part about allen if i am spoiling it or something...

I can’t come out and say I print every letter from a girl... or else people will just start saying they’re female to get printed... and we can’t have that. I get enough people acting like ladies on the internet. I don’t need it in my letters columns to.

Hey, Kirkman... Still loving the book! A little slow this time, but pacing is necessary now and then... I was surprised to see Dale survive the zombie bite after how Allen died. Great job throwing us off the trail there. But I know how you hate hearing the same boring crap about how great you are, so I’ll get on to some questions about the letters (see, some people really do read them!)...

1. I’m really curious about this one. Why do you think washed out color would work

so well in a movie when you are so dedicated to keeping the book black and white? I'm not saying either is a bad idea, I'm just curious as to why you think the coloring should change in a different medium.

I doubt anyone would want to make a black and white movie. It's not often done and the only time, in recent memory, it's been successful is Shindler's List. I don't think you'll EVER see a straight black and white TV show. I also think washed out color just looks cool.

2. Did you print Valeria's letter get printed twice on purpose? It was a great letter and probably worthy of a second printing, especially since many people may have missed it in the previous and much longer lettercol... Just wondering if it was intentional or not.

I think I printed it first, out of the order it came in to make sure it got printed... then accidentally forgot and printed it again because I'm a moron. I do these things late at night... never quiz me on letter column stuff... I'm usually in a sleep deprived stupor.

3. Not a question, but I thought it was interesting that I got into comics much the same way you did... I was a big baseball card collector as a kid. One day, my friends dragged me to a new store that had opened that sold cards and comics. I had read comics on and off before, but after a couple trips to the store, I started picking up more comics... I still go to the same store every week, but I can't remember the last time I bought a baseball card...

I honestly don't know why I was collecting baseball cards... I didn't know who anyone was and I never really watched baseball. Comics were a much better fit. I'm happier... aren't you?

Finally, bring back the Rathburn back covers! I miss them! The poster looks great, but I still want to see some more of Cliff's artwork!

Cliff is busy working on the new BRIT series--he's penciling, inking and coloring it. So no time for back covers!

I didn't get issue 41 before issue 40... Your time machine must be broken.

Breaking promises again... YOU STINK!

Jim Amato

You're right... I do stink. I'll go take a shower now.

Robert,

Issue 41 was kinda a let down man, don't get me wrong it was great having issue 41 only a week after issue 40, I just thought it was kind of a weak issue.

My first complaint is about Alice, how stupid do you have to be to want to study the zombies, I mean come on, what a stupid idea, Rick should have killed that thing the minute she brought it into the prison, what do you really need to know about them "destroy brain = dead zombie" and is a prison hospital really set up to run test and shit like that? It's not like they have a laboratory in the prison, I really hope she dies soon, she is getting on my nerves.

There's any number of things she could have done to that zombie with equipment from any medical center that would have taught her something more about zombies. She has a scientific mind... she's very smart, and she wanted to learn more about the enemy.

Second I think you killed off Carol just a little too soon, she was just starting to get interesting, I would have loved to see some drama between her and Hershel "Sleep with my boy and you will burn in Hades, slut!" type of shit happening, and it would have been kinda funny to see her only talking to that zombie, spending all her time out there reading it stories and brushing its hair.

Nah... it was time for her to die.

Don't get me wrong I not saying that I'm going to stop reading it or anything, I was just a little let down. All in all though, it just makes all the other issues that much better. Anyhow I do have a few questions I'm hoping you would take the time to answer:

1) Will we ever see Dexter's buddy Andrew again?

Probably not. But you never know.

2) Any chance of having the group venture into a city again? I know it would be hard to find a reason to go, but it would be cool to see one again.

Eventually, I'm sure.

3) I saw a picture of cover 41 online a while before it came out, and the background looked blue, when I picked up my issue it was purple, did Adlard change it, or were there 2 different covers? (it's probably my favorite cover yet)

It might just be your monitor. It's always been purple. Computers do that sometimes.

Thank you for a great series
Erik Porter

Thanks for ripping my heart out and stomping on it about issue 41... you jerk!

Kirkman,

WOW. I don't even know what to say. It was crazy enough to see 2 issues of Walking Dead in my comic shop, a mere week apart from each other...but that ending in #41...WOW. Billy was practically raped by Carol, and then her new best friend gave her a nasty hickey. Guess Lori's going to have to deliver on her promise now then, eh?

Other than the insane events with Carol, these two issues were pretty quiet. Lots of subtle things though. That's what I really dig about this series. There doesn't have to be any action at all, because the character interactions are so strong. An entire issue of Rick and Tyreese playing poker would probably be just as good as any other issue.

I cannot wait for the upcoming "no one is safe" arc, and the impending battle with the Woodbury jerks. Kinda worried about who's going to die next, but that's half of the fun in reading Walking Dead. You just never know. I'm also stoked about what's going on in Invincible (especially in #50...that cover has me counting down the weeks!). Wolf-Man's great too, but the bimonthly schedule is killing me. While I'm ranting and raving about your books, I gotta add that I'm going to really miss Ant-Man. Apparently he's going to appear in other series, but that's just not the same.

He's in good hands with Dan Slott over in Avengers: The Initiative. You'll like what he's doing.

A lot of people ask you what your favorite zombie movies are, so I'm going to ask something that I haven't seen asked in the letters pages (though i'm sure it has been...). What are some of your favorite bands and/or genres of music?

I guess that's everything for now. Keep on doing what you're doing, man!

-Dan O'Neill

I think I answered this before. Some favorites just off the top of my head? Nick Cave, Neil Young, David Bowie, Bog Segar, The White Stripes, Holly Golightly, The Presidents of the United States of America, The Strokes, AC/DC, Aimee Mann, Tool, The Beatles... I'm sure there are others.

Mr. Kirkman,

Why the hell would Rick wear his gun holster on his right hip?It's not like his stub is going to be winning any high noon duels...

I'll talk to Charlie about it. I'm not sure he could just reverse it, and it's not like he could buy a new one. I'm not an expert on holsters.

Thanks for killing Carol. Is it some sort of foreshadowing that the Zombie that killed her looks an awful lot like Lori? Poor Rick, if Lori dies his nipples are going to be SORE.

??

I'm really enjoying the book lately. It's great to see a shake-up coming up though, the survivors have spent enough time in that prison. Time to pack up the RV and head out to California.

Kudos!
-Zach L.

Sunshine!

Dear Kirkman,

The cover was lost on me; even after reading the issue itself it took me some time to figure out that there even Was blood on Rick's face on the cover..I just thought it was a bad mug shot maybe. "Everything is GREAT. Now let's see how long it LASTS."? The shorter the better for me really! The soap opera quality of the book is nothing really compared to actual violence and meeting the new characters from Woodbury. Believe it or not, I'm still memorizing characters names; I'd hasten to remind you that the more you use character names the quicker it is to Get to know them...but we've been through all that before. I think you may have accomplished something I've never seen before--two issues of the same series in the same week! Same Day, really. What is it about Image that issues have Always come out late?? I've got this great thing you might wanna look into--it's called a Printing Press.

You're right... we really should look into actually printing the books instead of conjuring them with magic. Good idea, Andrew. Also, the two issues shipped a week apart, not the same day.

I think there could be more T&A, if people still use that term, here, sure. And breast-feeding doesn't count. Another thing I noticed this issue: Besides Lori all the other women have either blonde or red hair, freckles and a ponytail (or are they all the same person?); this makes it a Little hard to tell people apart. Oh, and I hate ponytails. I think ponytails went out with actual Pony's.

Yeah, you don't see a lot of pony's around these days... I think they're extinct.

Does Rick's prison population really have anything to worry about with the Woodbury gang? Unless they're flying in somehow, they'll have zombies to deal with first, right? Now that I think about it, I think the prison itself may be the worst thing about this series! It makes things too safe, ya know? If there was just a small gang of them in a van against the world--that might be a bit better. What state is all this taking place in, right now anyway? Are they close to Washington D.C.? Do they know what's happening there? What IS happening there? Well, I gotta go; more TWD to read.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

They're in Georgia.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

I think you kind of brushed off Martin Casanova in the letters column this ish; don't know if you've noticed, but there are more foreign-based people in American comics now than ever, and more and more all the time(I know that cause I can't pronounce the names!)...and 600 people for a graphic novel presentation sounds okay to me.

I didn't mean to sound like I blew him off. Sometimes I read a letter and I just don't get the urge to respond to specific things, inspiration doesn't hit, but still, it seems like a readable, interesting letter... so I print it. I guess it could be taken as me blowing him off. As I recall, I remember the letters column for 41 seeming a bit dull as far as my responses went. I was having an off day.

I personally am not a fan of so-called zombies, really. Zombies aren't the greatest conversationalists for one thing; but they can be scary! Ever wonder why they move so slow, Kirkman? Maybe it's a circulation thing. I found your explanation of how a zombie is created to be a little vague. Carol, we hardly knew ya. She actually hadn't appeared in a while anyway I don't think...guess you got tired of her. Course a cliffhanger is a cliffhanger, and she hasn't even turned zombie yet, right? There should be a better word than just zombie, dontcha think? TWD's maybe? Hey--I got a nickname! At least according to Rev. Occulto's letter this ish.

Sincerely,

Godboy Andrew J. Shaw

PS: Good issue once again.

I thought a double shot of Andrew Shaw to wrap up this letters column would pack a bit more punch... you've let me down, Godboy. Try harder next issue.

And with that, I bring things to a close. I think this issue is shipping about five weeks after 42, so we slipped a week, but we'll try and make that up on 44. Things are moving along nicely, right? RIGHT?!

See you all again very soon,

-Robert Kirkman.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome!

Here it is! The Governor's vicious attacks against our survivors! But these letters have nothing to do with that!

- Sina Grace

Here we are at issue 44. This one kicks off the whole "NO ONE IS SAFE" arc of the book that'll be bringing us through issue 48. Big stuff is planned. The book will be drastically different here in a few months, you watch.

That's about all I want to say on the matter, other than get ready for the shit to hit the fan (much more than it already has).

Now let's answer some mail!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Well this will be my second letter I have written, the last one was a tad more serious, about the whole michonne thing... this one is to say YOU SUCK!!!!!! Let me reiterate YOU F*&^ING SUCK!!!!!! Do you have any idea how you ruin peoples lives? I have been an avid reader since TWD issue #1...which may I say is a gateway drug..... At first I thought I could control it....but quickly became an addict.....you really should put a warning label for that... but now, god, now I am worse.....and do you know why Mr. Kirkman....well I will tell you with one word INVINCIBLE!!!!!!

Wait... did you send this to the wrong address?

I used to be such a beautiful 28 year old woman, cute face and a great figure, I had friends, I had fun, I had a better relationship.....now, well now I have bags under my eyes from laying in bed wondering what happens, I have turned into a comic book dork (I mean hell I even have a reserve box), and my boyfriend is sick of seeing me dress up as Atom Eve in the bedroom.....I get the shakes and sweats.....I have lost more weight.....I know my dealer by his first name and I call him..... regularly!

You created this monster I have become.....and you need to fix it.....well you and that walker fellow... I had no idea this would happen when I picked up the first trade.... but then I rushed back to my dealer and pulled trades 2-8 off the shelf like it was crack.....at first my dealer just made fun of me....until I called the next day for more More MORE!!!!!!

Then he threatened to cut me off, and recommended that they might have treatment for this....well guess what they don't.... so now I have one more comic to pick up.....but it is still not enough I already have to wait patiently for each walking dead issue, but now this has just put me over the edge.....god I should be spending hundreds of dollars on new shoes or clothes like every other normal female....but no instead I buy hundreds and hundreds of dollars on the likes of you.....

I think people like you and Ellis, Bendis, and Brubaker, Ennis, and the whole lot of you should be ashamed at what a mess you make of peoples lives.....not to mention the fact that the artists (Adlard, Ottley, Crabtree, Rathburn, and lets not forget Mr.Wooton) need to be slapped for being so damn good..... You have all helped make me a junkie and I think at the very least I deserve an apology..... and I pray to god that you never stop writing more.....I don't think I would know what to do, I don't think I could make it again on the outside.....

So yeah thanks for the freaking amazing storylines, keep em coming!!!!

Sincerely,

Karith Cashion

So... I don't suppose there's any way I could talk you into trying THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN or the new BRIT series, is there? Heh.

Y'know, I wasn't going to print this letter because it's not really about THE WALKING DEAD... but y'know, you all really should be reading INVINCIBLE, THE ASTOUNDING WOLF-MAN and BRIT--that is, if you can stand superheroes at all.

Yeah, I guess you probably do get tired of email after email telling you how great you are. It sure seems like a real love fest between you and your fans. I can't even get my Mother to say nice things about me.

I really don't... please--keep it coming.

If it makes you feel better, I don't think you're so hot. I mean, you're ok and all. I do dig The Walking Dead and a few of your other books on a monthly basis. Battle Pope was really a swell idea. Anyway, the point of my letter is to let you know that The Walking Dead has really been dragging as of late. Nothing has really been going on much at all. Something needs to happen. I don't think I can take another issue of the gang just hanging out and looking cool. I mean, send them out exploring or something. Let them find a new town or a new group of people. The last 3 or 4 issues have been pretty much just a big bundle of fluff. Your stories always seem to move a little slower than most comics, but enough is enough. I love the book, but it needs to start moving forward.

Thanks for your time,
Jeffrey Gibson

Well, things ARE picking up, I hope, starting this issue. That said, I don't think this book moves slower than most comics just because a super-villain isn't busting through a wall every eight pages. While it might be lacking in action, this is a book about normal characters and I think the things that have been happening in the book have been important to the overall arc of the characters. That said, like I said before--things are picking up now.

Hello.

I've come to interrupt your regularly broadcasted sausage-fest to NOT talk about Michonne's rape, racism, and how apparently being an atheist is wrong in a comic book about lost morals and dead people eating living people. I mean, seriously boys, stop whining! I want to first thank you for finally having Carol snap. While I have come to care about these characters probably a little bit more than is considered healthy, Carol needed to go. She was a loose cannon and nobody else was making any moves toward complete insanity, so kudos. Though I hardly need to congratulate you on writing awesome story arcs, it seems to be one of the things you do best. I can't really describe what it's like, as a fan of your work, to be waiting in agony to see if a two dimensional apparition delivers a healthy baby, or survives a non-existent bite to the leg. I'm sure my boyfriend would be afraid for my own mental health if he wasn't also completely roped in.

I am currently an illustration major who's trying to focus in sequential art and that who-ha, and while I'm not sure if I'll end up writing comics, storyboards, being a world renowned chef or joining the circus, it's nice to have something to look at that gives me an air of confidence. I don't get a lot of support for my own work at home, while my skill is not in question, I think I just scare my parents with the idea that I like drawing flesh eating zombies

and silly, but often vulgar pictures. I'm not twisted, I don't wear raccoon eye makeup and feign despair, I'm a happy chick, I just have a flare for the demented. Have you encountered this problem, or is it a lost daddy's little girl thing only? I don't expect you to hold the answer as if you're Yoda himself, but hell, you'd have a better perspective than me at this point. I usually hate writing letters like this, essentially a fan letter, but from your responses to other letters, you seem like a stand up guy.

Yeah, I'm totally awesome. And also yeah, I think it's a girl thing.

I guess the only other thing I wanted to say was I felt an air of Day of the Dead in issue 41, and that rules. Whether it was intended or not, it certainly wasn't cheesy, as your work is consistently tasteful (given the genre). You're going places, mister! The best of luck to you!

Erin Leary

Well, Day is my favorite Romero movie--and zombie movie, so yeah... can't really help it if some things seep in. It wasn't intentional.

P.S. If you haven't seen Hot Fuzz, you should.

Seen it, loved it, bought the DVD and will soon buy the bigger more expensive DVD for the extras because I am a sucker.

Just read issue 41, NICE. Ever since I finished the issue, I've been thinking about the way the story unfolded. I finally decided to just go ahead and send in my question. As I witnessed Carol's, in essence, downward spiral I immediately thought she was going to kill herself. When I finished the issue, I initially thought you had tipped your hand too much and almost gave away the fact that she was finally going all the way off the deep end. The foreshadowing of her settling up with Lori, arranging for her daughter's care, and her last fuck all seemed to eagerly point to her preparing to die. As I reflected more though (My mind tends to wander at work) I recalled that I was still very tense as I saw her walking towards the captured zombie, and still shocked as she let the zombie bite her. The *method* was enough of a jolt to shake me from the comfort of knowing her death was coming.

Now I'm stuck in kind of a rut wondering if you had intended to lead us along realizing what she was planning to do; still being shocked and disgusted by the irrationality and bizarreness of the manner in which she chooses to commit suicide. On the other hand, as I mentioned before, it just might have been an instance of over-foreshadowing, intending us to merely feel that something just wasn't right (of course you'll probably never admit to it :D). I'd be interested in understanding the process you were going through writing this series of events.

Regardless, this book is my favorite of the books I'm currently reading. It's one of the only things keeping me interested in an industry I feel has become stagnant with never ending, unevolving, cliched super hero books.

So, until the "Zombie Season" on LOST, or Rick and the gang become stranded on a mystical island, keep up the awesome work,

John

Well, I wasn't so much trying to telegraph that she was about to commit suicide as much as I was just showing her tying up the loose ends... I wanted people to see that something was not quite right with her (as it has been for some time) and I was actually trying to give a bit of a sense, with her talk with Lori, that things were getting back to normal between them (or close to it). If you did see it coming, I'm glad the method, at the very least, was a bit of a shock.

Dear Mr "took my writing a letter to a comic virginity and never printed it" Kirkman,

You bastard. God damn you. Why did you have to go and say that you listen to the Dirty Three. Truly one of the best bands on the planet. Now I cannot stay angry at you as you obviously have got great tastes and also I suppose because your writing is just so bloody good.

Just came back from holidays and after picking up my standing order was nicely surprised to have issues #39 to #41 sitting there waiting for me to read. And boy they didn't disappoint.

In issue #40 where Rick turns back to Lori after just hacking Dales foot and goes "this world , this fucking world" and Lori still centered on the baby just looks at him and then looking happy says "think we should name her Judith" was absolutely brilliant.

Such warmth and humour after such a brutal scene was pure gold.

I see Rick is still on a bit of a power trip. Takes over from Alice (basically pushing her out of the way) and hacks Dales foot off and then in #41 decides he will kill the groups "pet zombie" His, I know what is best for everyone and I will do it attitude is starting to remind me of Shane. I still love the guy and know he's been through a lot and has every one's best interests at heart but hey they made a committee and he isn't and doesn't have to be the leader and solely responsible for everything. Maybe running on testosterone and stupidity as he says. Maybe the new baby will chill him out a bit.

I think Dale is tripping that Andrea is looking to move on. Sure she said some things when he came to but not seriously. But you never know with you Kirkman, you sly devil. Let's hope that Tyreese can keep it in his pants if she makes a play.

A couple of letters (in issue #39 and #41) asked about using names more. You explained, quite logically, in #39 that would not be natural every time one person talked to another that they say their name. Excluding the now 5 young kids, there's only 13 (I think) main characters, 12 after that lovely ending to poor deluded Carol. Charlie's facial details of the characters is so much better than it used to be and after 4 years of reading I find it surprising that you would need a name supplied as to know who the character is. But I only collect TWD and 2 other comics (Usagi and The Goon) so maybe if you get a lot more comics every month it is harder. Don't know but just wanted to add my piece and ask not to be too over flooded with names.

I'm with you, but I will be trying to drop names in where it is natural... maybe a bit more often than before. \ Hopefully it won't be too noticeable.

Any special plans when issue #50 done? The missus cooking you your favourite meal, taking you out for a bit of a pub crawl or anything like that?

Just writing issue 51 and keeping the run going.

Congrats on the new addition to the Kirkman clan and for breaking into the top 100 and thank you and all the team for such an enjoyable read every month. Hoping to see this in print.

A fan for life
Joel Boyes

New addition? My son is a year and a half old now! Thanks though... but he'd be offended by being called "new."

Even if you don't print this please respond.

I just got the mailer today with WD issue #40. Love it. But I also received the Ultimate Spider-man 100 Project.

It was a great compilation of artwork that did include some of Arthur's work from Marvel zombies. I was a bit disappointed because I didn't see any of Charlie's work in there and to top it off there were several covers by the same artists. A few of them looked rushed as well. I have only come to one conclusion. You bastard... you worked poor Charlie to death and he wasn't able to participate with this fantastic project by the hero initiative. I hope you sleep well on your pile of money. I'm bipolar so that being said, keep cranking them out ASAP. We can't get enough.

Later Cap'n Rob.
Chris Deluna

I think it's as simple as Charlie just wasn't asked. Charlie's always doing side projects here and there and always asking me for more script--so trust me, I'm not working him too hard.

Dear Kirkman,

This is the first letter I ever wrote to a comic book letter page, But for this series I think it's about time I do, Walking Dead is the best comic book I read in a long time it's like watching a good tv drama you always want to know what will happen next. I also enjoy Invincible it would be cool if you do a Invincible and walking dead crossover just for the hell of it but that's up to you.

Sincerely,
Mason Miller

A crossover? I'm sorry--but there will NEVER be a crossover between The Walking Dead--and a superhero book.

That is a very true statement, that the Roamers are slow as all

hell, but when you are thinking they are not a threat, then you're deader than a door nail. Well, it wasn't put exactly that way in your story, but these survivors need to always be aware of their surroundings.

Great advice to watch the zombies patterns and how they move about. This is good leadership advice. I was completely shocked at Carol, she is truly crazy as all hell to confront that zombie. The bite out of her neck, left me gagging.

Paul Dale Roberts

Good... gagging is good. Glad to see I got a reaction from you.

Robert,

First off I just want to say congratulations for releasing consecutive issues of The Walking Dead in a two week span! When I saw Diamond had listed #41 for the following week after #40 was just released I believed it had to be a mistake and would be corrected the following Monday. But surprise, surprise, come Wednesday #41 was pulled for me. Hopefully a steady monthly schedule isn't too far behind because, recently, my interest has waned in standard super hero fare and my pull-list has taken a hit as a result. I've only been reading comics for a few years and mature, character driven titles such as The Walking Dead, along with any comic written by Ed Brubaker, are all that are left to maintain my interest in the hobby.

So after #41's astonishing ending, where does The Walking Dead go from here? A lot of the loose ends have been tied up in the last two issues with only one noticeable new one being created. Glen and Maggie got married, Lori's baby was born apparently healthy, Dale survived the zombie bite, and Carol finally...

Aside, the looming attack by the residents of Woodsbury and Dale's fear of losing Andrea, any hints as to where were heading next?

That looming attack was a big one...

I can't remember the last issue it was in but the character profile pages have been missing for quite some time! You said you removed them so they can be updated... Are they ever coming back?

They're very time consuming to put together and there's a bunch of new characters to list and I haven't had time. Eventually... I hope... but for now I just don't have time.

Don't disappoint me and end The Walking Dead anytime soon! I'm looking forward to a second omnibus shortly after the release of issue #48 and countless others after that. Also, there is only one way to do The Walking Dead series justice if it was ever to be made into a movie or television series; An HBO ongoing series! If done right that would be absolutely astounding.

Keep up the amazing work,
Mike Somma

I don't plan on ending this book any time remotely soon. So don't worry. The second Omnibus will be released with summer 2008 or before Christmas 2008, it'll have 25-48. I'm still deciding on when it will be out--but it will be out.

Hello again, Kirkman. Another week, another TWD... Let's keep this pace up, okay?? I need more zombie goodness every week! Seriously though, thanks for pointing out that you're only 5 issues behind after 4 years.

That's really not bad nowadays. I wouldn't even notice if you didn't mention it in the lettercol just about every month... ;-)

Well, I don't mention it as much as letter writers mention it. I'm not going to apologize for it any more, I think we've shipped more issues in our time than any other independent book in recent memory. 7 TPB volumes in 4 years is pretty damn good, I think.

Another fine issue here. Carol is one messed up broad! I don't think I ever realized quite how deranged she really is... I didn't expect her to try to off herself again so soon, although I did think you telegraphed it a few pages earlier when she asked Lori if she'd take care of Sophia. I can't believe Lori let her just walk away at that point... How could she not know something like this was coming? It doesn't look like there's any hope of saving her now, but

I thought that with Dale too... I'm interested to see if you find a plausible way of saving Carol now.

Keep in mind this isn't normal every day life we're talking about. Every one of these characters expect to die at some point--the odds are against them.

It's not odd at all for Carol to ask Lori to take care of Sophia if she dies. People are dropping like flies around them. I don't think Lori would give it a second thought.

Sorry to hear about Ant-Man being cancelled... I didn't even know it was ending until I read it in your letters page... That was a fun book. Sorry to see it go so soon...

Eh... before it's time, maybe? Who knows. Books come and go. If none of my series had ever ended I'd be writing fifty books right now or never would have been able to start something new (or I would have had to--gasp--quit a book).

I'm glad to see you're finally putting your racial arguments to rest in the letters page and moving on to your extreme hatred of religion instead.

HAH!

Progress at its finest! Maybe the name of Letter Hacks should be changed to Kirkman's Political Forum. :-) I agree with your view though. Organized religion is all well and good, but none for me, thanks.

So, issue 50 is going to be a major turning point, eh? Is this when the aliens finally come to wipe out the zombie menace? I've been looking forward to that for far too long...

No aliens in 50... maybe issue 75.

Out of curiosity, how far in advance does Charlie draw the covers for TWD?

Well, he drew the covers for 44-48 before he started issue 43... so a bit.

I noticed that Rick still has his stubble on this cover and on the cover for issue 42. Doesn't Charlie know he's drawing a clean-shaven Rick on the interiors?!? And speaking of Charlie, that reminds me - I have to go tell him to make me a zombie just like he did Jeff J!

Jim Amato

Well, the cover to 42 was drawn well in advance of the issue, usually 4 or maybe even 5 months before the issue is started. So they'll rarely be completely accurate. The job of a cover is to sell the book, though... not show you exactly what's inside, per se. Hell, half the time I use the covers to deliberately LIE to readers so they won't see what's coming. I mean, you wouldn't want a surprise given away on the cover--would you?

I don't care if this makes it to letter hacks or not but I demand vindication!

I recently purchased a handful of THE WALKING DEAD and it's the best goddamn comic I've read in ages... kudos! However, upon closer inspection of issue 27 April 2006, the first 8 pages are friggin repeated so in reality I have 16 pages of the same story with absolutely no closure and to top it off I have 6 repeated pages of letter hacks! (that could be 6 more pages of this awesome storyline but what can ya do) maybe this is the rare find of the century, either way it does me no good its a crucial part of the story and I have no closure, I need closure. I will gladly send it back for a new copy or perhaps a nice TPB :)

I believe the reader/writer relationship has been breached due to a faulty product and I expect at least confirmation that u have read and thought about my grievance.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration

If you send your copy of issue 27 to my brand spanking new P.O. Box I'll gladly mail you a replacement copy. And that goes for ANYONE with any kind of book that has such a printing error. Just include a note telling me what's what. What you've got here is a rare printing error that occurs all the time... it's just one of those things in the printing business.

Mr. Kirkman,

I finally tracked down some early issues of Invincible and took your letter column suggestions to heart. 1) Keep the praise to a minimum, 2) number questions and keep them relevant for letter-column readers, and 3) sign a name. I wanted to ask if those suggestions still stand, and if there's anything you would add.

Don't complain about that rape business or any perceived racial or religious bias... but that's not a hard and fast rule.

It seems like you’ve paced these last couple issues as a [relative] calm-before-the storm before all hell brakes loose with the revenge of the Woodburians (can’t wait to see what happens there). I’ve enjoyed watching the characters develop and the small shockers like Dale getting bit in parallel with Lori’s birth, and Carol offering herself first to Billy and then to the pet-zombie... a despairingly narcissistic yet martyr-like sacrifice. And then I laughed, because Carol getting bit at the end of 41 was also a very Sally Field moment... “you DO like me”!

Groan.

A few questions:

1) Where was Michonne in this issue? Talking to the voices again?

Taking a nap? It’s a big prison.

2) The cover to 40 lost me. What is Rick splattered with blood and mouth agape about? Dale? And what is that open gash on his nose from? Just his old scar? I wonder if that’s one problem with soliciting covers so far in advance...

Well, that was the exact same moment after he cut off Dale’s leg--so the cover worked, it was one of the more literal covers. And yes, Rick still has the scar from his fight with Tyreese.

3) The cover to 41, however, was brilliant, because whenever it was solicited months ago I wondered... aw snap does Lori die in childbirth and become a zombie!?! But it’s not Lori, it’s zombie Barbie. I think you’ve done that sort of teaser with a lot of the covers and it’s great. 27 is my favorite (the zombie reflections in the riot gear helmet), but it was too much to buy over at splashpageart.com and you know... doesn’t look good in the living room with the Rodin theme and all.

Thanks? And... you should have bought that cover.

4) Where can I find me a SUPA CRIB like Glenn and Maggie? I need more Walking Dead merchandise.

Available at Wal-Marts everywhere.

Thanks for the ever-great reads,
-Brian Hans

Thanks for the letter.

Back a few months ago when issue 34 came out, and I got to the double page spread of the prison overrun with zombies, I actually said out loud while reading the book, “Holy shit!”

And at the time I thought to myself, “That’s a damn good comic right there.” I mean, you expect people to do that kind of thing on occasion in the movies or to a TV show. You’re hearing the characters on the screen speak to you, so it’s only natural that when something shocking happens you would have some sort of oral outburst. But that a comic, words and pictures on a page, could elicit a verbal response from me while I’m reading is a testament to its powerful storytelling.

And with issue 41, you did it again.

I reached the final few pages, with Carol talking to the zombie, and I was thinking to myself, “wow, she is all kinds of messed up, isn’t she?” and then I turned the page. And I exclaimed “oh what the fuck?!”

So there’s a kudo for you: “Walking Dead: making more readers swear out loud than any other comic currently published!”

I look forward to the next foul-language-inducing issue.

Steve Higgins

I hope to be able to pull this off again at some point in the future. We’ll see.

Hey, Kirkman, thanks for printing my other letter a few issues back about ish 35.

I have a new and serious question for you, which I’m surprised no one has brought up yet.

Rick lost his right hand. Adlard keeps drawing him with his gun still slung on his right hip. How is a man supposed to draw and fire his sidearm without his hand?

True he could ‘reach around’, (insert your own prison joke) but this would be time consuming and deadly if needed his gun in a hurry.

Logically, he should wear his sidearm in a cross draw rig, or should switch it to his left side so he can draw it with his left hand. Or at the very least, turn the holster around so that the butt is out for his left hand to grab onto. maybe there is a shoulder holster in the armory.

Thanks for doing a super job.
Jerry Dickson.

Well, I don’t know that there’s a lot of quick draw action going on with Rick. I mean, right now, in the prison at least, there’s not zombies jumping out from around corners--he knows when he might need to use a gun--so he can have it drawn in advance. Also, it slows things down a second or two, but really, reaching over to your other side isn’t that hard.

True, the gun is backwards that way, but it would be backwards if he just spun the belt around to the other side too--and there’s not a ton of gun belts lying around right now--so--he’s kind of stuck with it right now.

Hello, Sir!

It is extremely exciting that you actually read through these fan letters and reply to them yourselves. Hell, I typically read what you write to people and decide based on that if I want to read what other people wrote. Let me get the kissing up out of the way because, sir, this comic/graphic novel/story is AMAZING! I love it. I am actually not even a comic reader...I have a strong interest in comic art and have collected a few comic #1 issues when that was all the craze (right when Spawn came out). Not to mention whole series of comic cards like Marvel’s first three sets and it’s Masterpiece series. But, I was much younger then and that was many years ago. So, last week I strolled into a comic book store with an avid reader of comics and saw your book. Being a huge fan of the zombie genre, I’ve heard people throw the name “The Walking Dead” around and knew I had to give it a read...well, I’m glad I did and it’s almost sad that I have now caught up to your four long years of work. I even have the hardcovers coming in soon (book three - preordered).

Book three will be out soon.

Tony Moore’s artwork from the beginning was amazing and since I got a late start in the series and was reading #6 and #7 back to back it was almost hard for me to accept the way Mr. Adlard was drawing the characters (especially Rick/Lori). But, I can definitely say that I love everything he has done and his art has been the perfect compliment to your amazing writing and story-telling skills. That Mr. Rathburn guy...he’s not too shabby either.

Well, he’s a little shabby... but only on weekends.

Mr. Rathburn is actually a huge part of why I’m writing to guys (you know, besides the fact that you guys and “The Walking Dead” are completely awesome). I love Rathburn’s back cover art. His zombies are very fun to look over and intriguing at the same time. I tried to Google somewhere I could buy posters featuring his zombie artwork, but...no luck. I am definitely going to go out and pick up the poster you’ve been advertising in the book, but what about a giant, wide print featuring all those zombies Mr. Rathburn’s been gracing us with on the back cover. Due to my late start, I know I’ve missed quite a few, but hopefully a full sized poster would fix that nicely. Hmmm...is it sick that I want to hang a poster of rotting corpses on my wall?

Not sick at all--I’ll definitely think about it.

Mr. Kirkman, sir, thank you for your time reading this. What happened to your site, www.robertkirkman.com that funkotron points to? Also, I do dabble in some webdesign/graphic stuff... Maybe I can throw up an unofficial (or official?) fan page for you guys. I’m not so sure why I don’t see many out there. Maybe they get lost in the Google searches. I just hope it’d be ok to use the images/covers for the page.

My site will actually be going live before the end of the year for sure... maybe much, much sooner!

Thanks again -- I don’t write many fan letters (or any?) and I definitely have not written to a comic before! Hoping and anxious to hear a response.

Respectfully,
Chris Kuntz

You should write more often.

Hey, Kirkman, I know I just sent you email yesterday about Rick’s hand / handgun, but I forgot to add another observation.

First off, good fake out on the front cover of 41. I thought for sure that the Zombie was supposed to be Rick's wife, and that she died of complications after the birth...the zombie does look like her, same type of clothes, and hair...

Not to critique too much, but on the back of the issue...the page that says "Next issue The time has come"..... whoops.... Dale has his LEG BACK and is standing. Obviously this was drawn in advance of the writing.

(Also, I know it is because she is in the foreground, but it looks like Andrea is grabbing Hershel's groin...especially cause the look and his face!!)

Sorry to pick out the small stuff...just trying to keep it real. You guys are great...keep up the good work.

Jerry Dickson.

That cover was done in advance of the issue, and more importantly it was SEEN by the public before the issue where Dale lost his leg came out. So to people who saw that cover--things would be spoiled if he had a peg leg or was on crutches or whatever. So yeah, he's got a full leg there--but it's not a mistake, it's that way so we don't give things away. Also, there are TPB readers who see the covers to the singles issues months before they read the TPBs, so I try to keep the covers as spoiler free as possible. It's all part of the plan.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I've read all of TWD and it is one of the best ongoing series being published today in any medium.

The narrative turns that this book has taken (especially during the Safe Behind Bars arc and the Woodbury excursion) have been gut wrenchingly marvelous. I had to literally put the book down during the rape scene because I needed a break from the horror that had filled me.

As much as I love your book I have two comments (rather than criticisms).

1) Even though I love the realistic black/white artwork of Adlard (so much so that I have--hanging in my apartment--an original page of Charlie's from TWD) lately I've been having a hard time keeping track of the growing cast of characters. Everyone, and I'm sorry for even thinking this...and if you totally disagree, please, say so and help me see it your way...everyone seems to look more and more similar. Sometimes I read a page and I think to myself, "Who is that?"

I understand that we're not dealing with iconic supermen and women...these are regular people...and I can't praise TWD team enough for depicting everyday people in your comic with verisimilitude...and I would totally be okay with it if you responded, "Charlie and I decided that in order to comment on the facelessness of the zombies we would slowly breakdown distinctions between the 'human' cast." But, seriously I don't think that's the case at all. Is it me? I know you're not the voice of the readership but am I the only one having this problem? Do you even think it's a problem?

Is it a problem for SOME people? Yeah... but you know what, there's really not a lot that can be done at this point. The characters DO look very different--VERY different. If I lined up headshots of all the characters you would see that they are very unique looking people and easy to tell apart... but sometimes, in the context of the story, I guess it can get a little confusing. All I can say is that the number of characters in the book will be getting cut back a bit over the next few months--maybe it won't be a problem then.

Here is my second comment:

2) There was a point earlier in the book when Rick had a talk with the guy on the farm about the zombies. It was a beautiful moment in the book. Perhaps the grandest when, for the first time, we, as readers, saw that people--within the world of TWD, did not all see the zombies in the same way. I think the man said something like, "They're not monsters. That is my son in there!" It was such a powerful moment that I smiled uncontrollably and I knew--at that very moment--that your world...our world, since every month you share it with me--had blossomed.

I miss those moments. Let me tell you why.

Lately your writing has focused on moments of characterization (perhaps to head off my first comment at the pass). These one page voyerisms haven't really been working for me. I use the word "voyerisms" because they often depict either two people isolated somewhere in the prison or, if these depicted moments

occur in public they're spoken in (what I imagine are) hushed tones. I think the reason that I haven't really been feeling them is because they're too short. The overarching narrative to the book is plodding and methodical--much like the biters and roamers themselves--but the brevity of the short vignettes is too much of contrast, I think.

The effect the conversation Rick had on the farm has yet to be duplicated in such a packed and concise way. (except maybe when one of the arcs finished with the twist reading of your title.) Instead, you and your team have duplicated the effect in more a sustained manner (namely the group moving into the prison and the discovery and escape from

Woodbury) and that is, perhaps, even more impressive. But, I can't help but miss those moments of thoughtfulness at the Otherness that your book has seemed to pass up lately in order so that the characters can become more familiar to us.

I guess what I'm still trying to gauge is, what is at the core of your book? I read it as a realistic metaphor not realism with touches of metaphor. How do you, and the other members of the team, view your book?

Yours truly,
Steffan DelPiano

Well, uh... I view it as a continuing tale of human suffering. There will be short scenes and long scenes. Things will speed up and slow down, but in the end it will be a chronicle of years of suffering endured by a group of (hopefully) realistic characters who have grown and changed over time. That's the plan at least. There will be more scenes like the one you mentioned, I promise. There's a lot of life left in this book, yet.

You Sexy Bastards-

I just had to tell you that your level of awesomeness went way up when you mentioned Passions in your last letter hacks. I turned that show on one day in college, my roomie and I were like "midgets, hell fires in the closet, witches and blind preists- its gotta be good." It's pretty much how I felt about your comic when I saw it. Goodness.

My boyfriend got the bite training for his second tour in Iraq and passed away this summer. He could only take with him what fit in his footlocker and I thought you guys might like to know several of your comics were in it. They got passed around the base. You remain a hit both among the living and dead. In your line of work that has to be the highest form of flattery.

Thanks a lot! I love all your comics. Especially the Pope kicking ass and taking names.
Brandy

Brandy, I'm a little dumfounded here... I gotta say. I'm glad you liked Passions and I don't know about you--but I was sorry to see it cancelled. Now, are you also telling me that your boyfriend died in Iraq and was buried with The Walking Dead? Or are you saying "passed away" has another meaning and he's not dead--just enjoying the book and passing it around the military base.

I don't know... I'm a bit confused. Seems a very casual way to mention a dead boyfriend. If he did die, I'm very sorry for your loss... if he didn't die... man, you sure do lead me to believe he did. I just don't know what to say other than...

Glad you liked Battle Pope!

And there you go--another end to another letters column.

I hope to see you all back here next month.

See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Howdy Walking Dead Weekly Readers,

Current Editor Sina Grace here, inviting you to another serving of fan mail from yesteryear (or so).

And that was issue 45... I hope you all liked it.

Okay, short letters column this month--the holidays are on the way an I'm trying to get these books out ASAP. I hope you understand.

Now, let's move onto the mail.

Hi Robert,

Another good issue. I was just wondering what ever happened to creating a character guide to print every month in the back of the book promised in a letter column many, many issues back? It would be helpful to have a reminder about who everyone is. It would make the stories even impactful, seeing as how I sometimes forgot how everyone is related to each other. Please consider it or I will have Ant Man cancelled. I have that power.

Kid Kaos

Well, thanks for cancelling Ant-Man... you'd think that'd give me more time to put together a new character guide--but sadly, it hasn't worked out. I'll see what I can do about getting one in the next issue or so... it's just a matter of having the time to do it, really.

Hello Mister Kirkman,

It's been a while since I last wrote to The Walking Dead. However I have kept up with every issue that has come out. This is still by far my favorite comic. Even when I was between jobs and had to make cuts to what I could and could not do. Walking Dead was the only comic I made sure I still got every month. It's that good.

Thank you very much--I really appreciate the support.

I have to say the end of issue 42 left my jaw hanging to the floor. All I could say was, "Holly shit!"

If this had been a TV series I could see this being the major cliff hanger at the end of a season. Leaving everyone wonder what the hell was going to happen until the next seasons started. Good thing this is a monthly comic. I would hate waiting all summer long to see where this is going next.

Great writing, great stories, great comic..... That is until the aliens arrive. Then I'll have to rethink everything.

Eric L. Busby

Glad you dug it. I hope you enjoyed seeing the EXACT SAME cliffhanger in issue 43 also, heh.

Dear Mr. Kirkinator,

I enjoy reading TWD due to the fact I love zombie anything. The story is amazing, as well as the art. I just have a problem with something. Rick's hand. I'm tired of seeing him bummed out about his stump, "Ohh, I can't play basketball anymore, boohoo. I have a useless stump where there once was a five fingered, useful apendige." I give me a break.

Have you ever lost a hand? Give the guy a break.

I think Rick needs to take after a certain well known someone with a ass kicking replacement for a missing hand. I am of course talking about Ash from The Evil Dead series. Now before I get flak about this let me explain. I know a chainsaw would be unrealistic due to the fact there is a shortage of gas (even after the raid on the National Guard Station, it would be a waste), and a robotic hand like the one from Army of Darkness would be out of the question due to the fact Rick could never be as crafty as The King.

So, let's look at what we have to work with. In earlier issues, Rick seemed to wield a hatchet nicely, so hatchet hand? Eh, maybe. I think he would still have the swinging power, as long as they can't get it fastened on there good enough. Groovy? I think so.

Even more outlandish? How about Captain Hook style? Nah, you would have to go through the eye socket with the pointy end and that could be tricky to get out, plus Rick would have to find i pirate uniform to actually look cool.

One of the best ways i think he could go is a bludgeoning weapon. I know they don't have any Medieval maces or spiked balls, but some type of viking-like stone mallet, something with weight that can crush a skull or knock something outta the way. A hammer head would be too small (oversized hammer would look ridiculous)

What about a bladed stump? That would be wicked, long but not too long. If the riot gear could be modified to cover all of his stump a small blade would be decent due to the fact the suits are bite proof. I still say a long blade, but I'm sure Mac wont want to give up her katana.

A lawn mower like from Dead Alive would be too big, plus i don't think they have one. Actually, looking back on that, how the hell would he put that one his hand?

We can even talk about non-combat attachments! Anyone need a bottle opener, can opener, file, toothpick?!? Swiss Army Knife Rick, the ultimate handy man.

Rick needs to capitalize on this so called loss. I'm tired of looking at his plain stump and seeing so much potential. Maybe after it heals up a little more, Rick will start thinking straight and turn into a steel appendaged undead killing bad ass. I still love him though, even though he only has one hand. This would totally take away his feelings of uselessness and sad feelings about his "loss"

In all seriousness, I do believe something should be done with Rick's stump. Whatever you do, keep the TWD coming.

Chris Allgood

PS. Hail to the king baby.

Just to give you guys a little insight into my creative process--just to pull the curtain aside a bit--this IS something I've put a LOT of thought into. You see--The Walking Dead is a serious book. I think that's a very important part of its success. Aside from the zombies walking around and a few things I've fudged here and there--most of the things that happen in this book COULD happen in real life. It's "grounded" in reality at least for the most part.

So yeah, chainsaw hand--totally stupid.

BUT, thinking logically... were I in the situation Rick is in... with the one hand and all, at least in a battle situation (like the one we're kind of in now) I'd want to have something there. And realistically it could be done. If he duct taped a butcher knife to his forearm--that could totally work and it could be used for stabbing and cutting. He'd need to have a belt or two on there to hold it on--and a shit load of tape--and it wouldn't last long after being used a few times... but he could get a few good kills in as long as it was fastened well enough.

So I was totally going to put a knife on his arm--at least temporarily from time to time. I even discussed this with my good friend Ed (famous) Brubaker. He suggested a sledge hammer instead, because of the long handle that could be used as a counter weight but I think that would be too heavy--it'd slow him down and keep him off balance.

But anyway--even though him doing this would be logical, and slightly realistic... it would LOOK a bit silly and I'd never hear the end of Evil Dead comparisons which frankly, I'm already sick of (despite how much I love those movies).

So in the end, I decided against it. So (for now at least) he's just going to have a stump... until I change my mind.

Wow.

Suicide by zombie? That's got to be a first, right?

And the saddest part is, it really makes sense for Carol's character, after all the situations she's gone through before.

Wow. Just. . . wow.

Sean Landry

Eh... technically that dude at the end of Day of the Dead beat me to it... but he was a bit more crazy and really fucked things up for everyone else with his suicide. So Carol's was different. But still... Romero (as always) was blazing the trail.

Hey Kirkman,

The latest Walking Dead- shut my mouth. I had written before saying that it didn't seem feasible for Woodbury to attack (not with all the obstacles in their path) but I never considered that they would be so mobile. I was not so surprised to see the Governor alive because I thought you left something on the table after Michonne exacted her revenge by not feeding him to his daughter. That is his daughter, right?

That remains to be confirmed.

The trick now is to see if the Governor is so hell bent on revenge that he would overrun the prison and the fences, compromising the defense that they offer or attack more judiciously. I think the choice has to be made. Does the Governor still want the prison so his people can live there or does he want to kill Rick's lot as quick and painfully as possible? Just thinking ahead.

I loved the movie 28 Days Later but it really stepped up a notch when the Army became as real a monster as the infected (though I am sure there is much debate over that premise). It showed that in 'end times' like this it is not so black-and-white as to who you need to be the most wary of. People (I'm talking about your readers now) have become so complacent with the idea of civilized society that they would most likely assume that in the event of such a crisis all the living would band together, that those that are left would want to carry on with the same prior morality as much as possible. That may not be the case. The Woodbury storyline drove that point home well. And if you look back, you can see that in Rick's character except either Rick has a layer of humanity OR we have been along for the ride with Rick for so long that we tend to give him the benefit of the doubt.

And now that the Governor and Woodbury thread is continuing it appears as if the bloodthirsty readership will be sated. Though I like the more day-to-day stuff this aspect needs to rear its ugly head. Sometime, somewhere we knew it had to get ugly.

Lastly, congratulations on getting back on schedule. I have a slight idea of the effort that must have taken. Most readers probably do not realize all that's involved in putting out a full comic each month, but if they could they would see that a number of things have to fall together. I assume that the larger companies are able to do so because they have more 'lackeys' to do the 'dirty jobs' than a smaller group as y'all.

Again, my condolences for your loss,
Dawson

Well, yeah... the schedule is difficult... that's why most independent books are worse off than we are. But y'know... it's part of the job, so we do our best.

Dear Robert,

I am an Italian guy who happened to be in the US for some time and ended hooked up by your Art. I love US and I love The Walking Dead. Now that I am back to Italy I can hardly wait for TWD trades every six months or so. I have been following the online forum and read there all the spoilers before getting the seventh trade, so I think I know almost everything that happened so far.

Zombies are the monsters I like the most, because they can be everyone: your friends, your relatives, the people you love, and even yourself if you let your guard down. But the scariest thing is what people can do to others after an apocalypse like this. TWD is the best Art on zombies since a long time.

Some questions about the series (I don't read the monthly books, just the trades, so I don't know if these questions have already been asked. If so, just disregard them)

1. We know just few things about the characters before the zombie storm (except for Rick). Maybe you could show flashbacks about each one of them, so that we could see what they were doing when the zombies hit the news and started to scratch their front door, up to the point we found them in your books. Pretty much like in the first season of the TV series LOST, where they showed each protagonist's story right before the plane crash. And this could work also for showing the story of the Governor and his people. Is this already planned to be shown? If not, can be?

Well, we did a flashback issue... but there's no plans to do regular flashbacks for all the characters. It's just not interesting to me. I want to see where they go--not where they've been.

2. Talking about this, why did you choose to skip the description of the zombie outbreak by starting the story one month after, when Rick wakes up alone in a hospital? The same happened in the movie "28 days later" and I guess that was a choice based on budget (it is expensive to show a civilization crumbling down)... but in a graphic novel you don't have budget limits! You can blow up as many cities as you want! So, what was your reason?

My reasoning was that. We’ve already seen that a billion times in a billion movies and other stuff. I wanted to get to what people haven’t done very much... the long term effects... show what happens next. That’s the idea behind this book. I try not to do anything that’s been done in anything else.

3. Have you planned to let people use the radio? I guess batteries are available in a prison, and if not, they have the radios in the cars. Maybe some military radio station is still broadcasting. It would be cool to have hints about the big picture: if there is still a Government and an Army and safe zones somewhere. Will be any of that any time soon?

Stay tuned. I’ve wanted to keep things pretty contained up to this point--focused on Rick and the rest. We’ll see where we go from here.

4. There is a growing interest in zombies lately, especially in the US and the UK. In the theaters there are now, or are planned to be, many zombie or zombie-like projects (Resident Evil: Extinction, 28 weeks later, Rodriguez’s Planet Terror, Day of the Dead’s remake). In the bookstores, other than your series, I can’t forget “World War Z”... Why this revival now? Do you think there might be any connection with the war that US and UK are spearheading (more than every other Countries) also in their homelands?

Fear and unrest breeds stories about the end of the world... so there you go.

Thanks for the big time you give me with these books. I can’t stop reading them over and over.

Best regards,
Roberto Dandi

Thanks for writing.

Hi guys,

Just wanted to do a follow up on that last letter- I had said I was disappointed in the lack of fallout from the group after Carol’s suicide attempt, but I said that wrong. Obviously there was a HUGE initial fallout, with Rick and Tyrese nearly killing each other, what I meant is that I was disappointed in the lack of follow up with how Tyrese and Carol were acting around each other after what happened.

Shana Cuddy, Boston

Sorry if I misunderstood. Maybe I did drop the ball on that a little... but they just didn’t interact much after that.

Mr. Kirkman,

We’ve hit issue 42 and the Wife and I are still here, reading each new copy with zeal. Do you realize just how big TWD has become? It’s all over any Amazon zombie search, not to mention the rest of the web. Hell, at Christmas my brother asked me if we were reading, wanting to make sure we didn’t miss out. TWD is quickly seating itself into pop culture. I think that’s a tremendous feat for a book not published by the big two. More importantly, in a world currently overwhelmed by zombie fiction (comics, movies, paperbacks) yours stands out as a gem.

Yay!

Quickly, enough with the racist rants and the crying about rape. Ok. Come on peeps, it’s a comic, not reality. We’re dealing with a survivalist situation that is going to bring out the best in some folks and the worst in others. It’s that simple. Allow me to use Katrina as an example. Some people helped others, giving them food, shelter, or getting them to safety. Many other people robbed, looted, and preyed on those they say as weak. It’s human nature, IMHO, that when it comes to survival that most of us will show who we really are. I think in this fashion TWD reflects reality fairly close. This is one brutal world. Limbs are coming off willy nilly, people are killing each other for sport,

and all folks can focus on is one rape? I just don’t get it. Is the rape terrible? Sure it is, but so is Dale’s loss of half his leg or Rick’s hand. I don’t see tons of folks writing in about how Kirkman must hate whites. Perhaps it’s time to move on.

You want to talk about fucked up? Lets us talk about Carol allowing the captive roamer to bite her. Now that’s fucked up! Having a romp in the sack with Billy, probably giving him God knows what kind of nightmares, is a serious twist of the knife, ya know? Strange enough, I’m sad to see Carol go. She added some serious drama to the story.

It was cool to see Rick and Lori’s baby born in the prison. New life in a dead world. I have thoughts that Alice is more than a convenient plot addition for the birth. I’m thinking there’s drama to come with Alice. I’m also waiting to see if Hershel’s faith, a faith that seems a little too over the top, leads to trouble at some point. Now Glen and Maggie are trying to conceive, I don’t know but I doubt it will end with a smile.

I have been eager, for months mind you, for the Woodbury attack. Finally! At last they attack and what do I get? Another damn cliff hanger! You are an evil man Mr. Kirkman. Very evil. I’d actually thought about the zombies around the prison and cannot wait to see how they work in the attack. Then again the Woodbury group has a tank. A frikin’ tank!

The world is full of dead people, limbs are flying, some are giving up, and now the only other living people our gang has found in all this time are going to attack them! I say bring it on.

Thanks for keeping us on the edge of our seats.
Chad and Venessa Cayler

You tell them Chad and Venessa!

Dear Robert,

I was referred to your book by Daryl, the Owner, of Collection Corner in Burlington NJ. It took me a while to get caught up as I started with issue 11, bought the trades, had a tough time finding issue 28 & 29 which I missed. However, I just finished Issue # 45 and loved every minute of it. Finally, caught up, this is truly a great read.

My first comic was Daredevil # 18 so I have been reading since before Peter saw M.J. I have the entire X-men run but they seem to have gotten very convoluted. I have been spoiled by Miller, Moore, Bendis and now you. I have always been a zombie fan. In fact one of my greatest memories is seeing Night of the Living Dead with Freaks on Halloween at Oklahoma State University back in 1974. This has been such a refreshing book. Thank you for creating such a terrific story and I wish you continued success. I am penning a letter to Invincible as well. Thanks in advance for printing my letter. Go Pokes!

Warm Regards,
Martin Blazy

Hmm... I just printed a letter in Invincible about Daryl, the owner of Collection Corner in Burlington, NJ recommending my books. I really should send this guy a Christmas card or something. Oh, wait... you wrote that letter too... I guess it’s just YOU, Martin.

That’s it for now, kids. Be sure to be back here very soon for the senses-shattering issue 46!

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello Roamers,

It's hard to re-read the death of Tyreese. RIP, dude.

- Sina Grace

First of all, sorry for the delay. The holidays crept up on me and pretty much wrecked my ability to get this book out. As I type this, Charlie is working on 48, so we should catch up in fairly short order. Things are moving along nicely for us to have an issue-filled 2008, so don't worry... this will just be another small hiccup along the way, hopefully the last.

Second, so long Tyreese, huh?

Tyreese has been one of my favorite characters in the book for a long time. I'm just as sorry to see him go as, I'm sure, a lot of you reading this are. Now, in the past, I've been raked over the coals any time I do anything to a minority character. It's not fair, and we've discussed it to death in this letters column, so I'd just as soon not have to deal with it in the letters column for the next six months.

While some deaths in this series are very spur of the moment actions that I try not to think through (because it makes things more spontaneous, like real life) Tyreese death has been planned almost since his introduction. It's always been something I've known about and have been working toward. It will have great impact on the series and well, frankly... nobody lives forever in this book.

Nobody.

So these things will continue to happen for the duration of the series. Characters have to die... that's just how the book works. So while I will miss Tyreese, I have the luxury of knowing what's ahead for the rest of the crew in this book, and so I know things will be okay.

So, uh... don't flip out.

Now, let's answer a bit of that mail.

Hey Kirkman,

All right, first things first: I'm a fan of Walking Dead. I dig it a lot, and I hope you keep putting it out for years yet to come. (You can feel the 'but' coming, can't you?)

Bring it on!

But here's the thing. Lately, your pacing really, really blows, and for me, issue 43 was really the last straw. Dude, you can't keep throwing cliffhangers at us then just not addressing them for a month. That's what I call self-indulgence and wasted opportunity.

What really gets me is that you *know* that shit is gonna piss us off, because you asked for our patience at the start of the letters page. Well, I got news for you, man. You gotta earn our patience. 'Cause mine is all used up after issue after issue that goes nowhere, even as you try to build up an imminent threat. You go on to say that everything that takes place is important later.

Well shit man, why not tell us later then? Do a flashback or something when it's relevant. Don't interrupt your momentum to

give us some bullshit background that, by your own admission, we don't need to know yet. That's lazy writing man.

Well, that's basically what I did. The important stuff from 43 that would be important "later" was important starting in 43. I didn't slow down the momentum of 36-42 by showing you the stuff in 43... instead, I saved it for a flashback.

The story has pretty much all but ground to a standstill for now. And that is downright amazing, considering you have a bunch of guys and a tank sitting outside the prison at the moment.

Yeah, it builds tension, right?! Right?!

So pick up the fuckin' pace man! If you keep on doing these tangents that overwhelm the main narrative, you're going to move into the realm of literary masturbation. I mean, for god's sake, Rick & Co. have been at the prison for more than two years of real time, and not enough is happening, even regarding (the initially excellent) character development.

Actually, Rick and company haven't been at the prison very long at all, not even a year. Lori was pregnant when Rick showed up and she gave birth nine months later, in issue 39. So they've only been here 7 months or so. A lot has happened to them in 7 months.

Anyways, I love this comic a lot. You've managed to single-handedly make zombies cool again, and the cast you've put together is second to none, I think. Don't squander what you and Charlie have worked so hard to put together, as even your most ardent fans grow impatient with glacial pacing! You deserve better dude.

Best,
Ben P

Well, starting with issue 49, things will be a whole heck of a lot faster. I'm taking my time with this Woodbury battle... it's probably the most important thing to happen in the book to date... but after that's over... it's full steam ahead.

Dear Captain Kirk(man)

Why the heck are you apologizing? The flashback issue was a great change of pace, insightful and refreshing. The governor is the consummate scumbag politician (reminds me of a guy named Anibal), and in a few ways he is a dark doppelganger to Rick.

I was not shocked at all by his appearance last issue, because some of our fighting men in Iraq have sustained worse injuries in the battlefield, and his "death" lacked the seal of finality of everything else we've seen before.

V Rosario Fermaint
San Juan

Glad you liked it. I too was pretty surprised when I saw so many people were under the impression The Governor was dead. I didn't even mean to imply that.

Mr. kirkman

I have to say the Governor is truly one of the sickest most vile, evil pieces of scum characters I have ever read. I love

him. Just when I thought you couldn't take him any further with raping and beating of Michonne, the live zombie feeding in a gladiator pit, severed zombie heads in fish tanks as entertainment, etc. You take him to another level not only do you have him survive Michonne's attack but you have him molest his zombie daughter that is just fucking sick where that hell did you come up with that idea,.... you know what never mind I might not want to know the answer to that. Thank you for such a great comic book I have been with you from day one and I just about love every issue. I never wrote before but after reading #43 I had to say something. You have truly taken zombies stories to another level. You are truly a superman among insects. Keep up the impeccable work

-James

Yeah, the zombie kiss... eh. I was just trying to think of the worst things The Governor could ever do. The Governor is the worst case scenario for what living in this world does to people. I want him to be the most extreme case.

Mr. Kirkman,

OK... after many "close calls" I'm finally writing my first ever letter to a comic book.

Congratulations, sir, you've popped my comicbook fan-letter cherry.

I've been a fan of THE WALKING DEAD since the very first issue (in fact, I remember running all over town trying to find a store that actually ordered the first issue after I heard about it) and now, finally, I've come to the point where there's a question I just can't wait to have answered.

What was the deal with the Governor before the zombie epidemic?

Based on what we know of his character, I'm guessing that he wasn't necessarily Governor before all this started and that he somehow used the disaster to insert himself (no creepy pun intended) in a position of power... is that the case? What the hell is the back-story on this evil piece o' crap?

If we're going to learn more about his past later I'll gladly accept a "wait and see" answer... but if not, how about some insight into this evil prick? I mean, really, what the Hell is the deal with this guy?

Well, I really would like to show some of his past, just to give people a little more insight into his character. But I don't know if I should. The jury's still out on that one. Only time will tell.

Oh... one more thing. I've been raving about this book to my sweet lady for a while now and she recently asked me "Do the zombies digest the food they've eaten? If not, how can they keep eating? What happens to it?"

So... does the food somehow get dissolved and absorbed into their bodies... or, not to put too fine a point on it, do zombies poop?

Whatever the answer (or answers), keep up the good work, sir! I'm in for the long haul!

SINcerely,
Dirk Manning

Do zombies poop? Well, I'd think not. There's a few options here. In Marvel Zombies I stated the zombies had a powerful stomach acid that dissolved all the flesh they ate. A friend of mine, Mark Kidwell, hypothesized that zombies would just eat and eat until their stomach's burst. And that zombies would be walking around with gaping holes where there stomachs would be. I don't know the science behind it all, but maybe zombies do continually "evacuate" like recently dead people do. Obviously their digestive track doesn't work... they're dead... but maybe flesh and guts can just pass on through, all the way to the logical conclusion (pooping, kids). Now, I don't picture a zombie stopping and squatting or anything like that... but maybe they're soiling themselves as they shamble along.

Okay... that was fun.

Dear Cap'n Kirkman,

So now we're doing issues without the cast entirely? I guess it

was okay, though; I just don't understand about the little zombie girl—she is dead, right? I don't have much to say other than that.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for writing anyway, Andrew. Always a pleasure.

Hello,

I really enjoy the book and have finally caught up through the trades enough to read new issues. I enjoy the realistic conversations and the overall believable tone of the series. You're the main reason I began paying attention to the names of writers on my comics. I began looking for other things you were writing and ironically enough realized I was already reading half of them. I began to read Invincible through trades while still getting (but not yet reading) Invincible and related books. You have become one of my favorite writers and a great inspiration for me as a wannabe-writer.

I enjoy the way the characters in WD have passed on. Some deaths truly disappointed me but only because I felt I knew the characters. At no point while reading this book have I questioned one thing that has transpired or thought of any plot point as a creative mistake. I find no flaws in this book. I was sickened when Lori cheated on Rick, I was shocked when Carol died, I was sympathetic when Michonne was raped and I had to turn away (and had to read it again for sheer shock value) when the Governor was tortured. If Dale had died I would have been heart broken. To take characters and make them part of a reader's life takes talent. Needless to say, you are talented.

I work in a comic book store in Gastonia, NC and have talked a few people into getting your other books but unfortunately, Walking Dead remains my solo adventure. In a way it makes me feel like the book is written specifically for me. I feel like I'm the survivor no one sees or hears. This book is written in such a way that it takes us to a place where even in a world filled with zombies, we can relate to the characters. That's what I love about Walking Dead.

I also enjoy the long letter column. However, I was wondering why letter columns are never collected in trades. I have never heard an explanation for this, I was wondering if perhaps you knew.

The letters columns are kind of dated, I think... and they'd take up a ton of damn room in the TPBs making them bigger and more expensive. I doubt that would be worth it in the long run.

Although, I do love money... so if anything thinks they'd order a TPB of just the letters columns let me know. If I hear from a ton of you—I'll do it. But... I'll feel really silly and ashamed, just so you know.

I enjoy your work, and I am a truly grateful fan. You and a video game called Dead Rising are responsible for my love of zombies (I don't like many other Horror movies besides zombie related ones). I hope to one day be able to write comics and you serve as a great example of what a writer should be.

May the Dead keep Walking,
Adam Davis

Well, thanks so much for all the kind words of praise, Adam. I wish you the best of luck with breaking in as a writer. It's quite tough.

I got Dead Rising for my X-Box but I've never played it. I look forward to one day having the time. I hear it's awesome.

Kirkman,

I didn't discover Walking Dead until around issue 28 or so. A friend introduced me via the trade paperbacks and, since then, I've been hooked! At the end of each issue I can't wait for next month to get here so I can read the next chapter.

At the end of issue 43 you said you were prepared for complaints. Well, I'm here to surprise you. While reading the issue I was expecting to see the scene with the Governor and his crew approaching the prison about midway through, and the last half would be the assault on our friends that reside there. After finishing the issue, I have to admit, I was a bit disappointed. Not because it was a bad read, but because I'm twice as excited as I

ever have been about the next issue and I still have to wait thirty days for it to get to me! I think you chose a great way to tell this story. The flashback issue was an excellent idea. To hell with all the naysayers. The only bad thing about this issue is waiting for the next issue.

Walking Dead is one of the greatest comics out there right now.

I don't care if this letter gets printed or not. I just wanted you and everyone else involved to know that you are doing an amazing job with this book. It's the one I most look forward to every month. Even with all the heroes and mutants running around in the comic world, I say Make Mine Zombies!

Brandon

Well, much to my surprise, response to issue 43 seems to be largely positive. I'll try and do more all flashback issues to slow down the pacing from here on out. Thanks!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I was tuned into The Walking Dead a little over a year ago by a friend who lent me the first TPB and I have been a loyal reader since then.

I have been like a kid in a candy store with each new issue due to the rich character development, the realistic portrayals of human conflict and suffering during extreme events and the obvious care that you, Charlie and Cliff show for these characters month after month.

Issue 43 was not one to disappoint.

While there was a pang of "loss" for not getting to see in this issue the Governor's assault on the prison, I was nonetheless gratified by this story. The extra delay in seeing the assault will make the inevitable conflict all the more immediate and intimate when it finally happens, primarily because of the length of time readers like myself have spent emotionally invested in these characters. We don't want to see bad things happen to the people/characters we like, but as we've learned all throughout this great story: no one is truly golden. EVERYONE SUFFERS.

Issue 44 will bring us readers to a place we've been dreading since these wonderful and tragic characters showed up at the prison. They will face a threat far greater than any zombie horde. They will face their own living kind. They won't be facing traumatized, yet rational human beings. They will be attacked by people who have been living at the razor's edge for weeks on end, who are driven by fear, death and suffering. At the head of this vanguard of destruction is a maniacal monster whom his followers fear and in a twisted way, love and trust.

Thus, my belief that you were right to tell more of the Governor's story now, in one issue.

In issue 43 we've received a further glimpse into the depth's of this man's very sad existence. I appreciate being able to see how the villain in a story thinks, and see the kind of loyalty and passion (and ultimately, fear) he can inspire in his followers. I like to see where the depravity lies and how many moral boundaries are sacrificed with each passing look at the villain. The sequence of the Governor plucking out the zombie girl's teeth in order to kiss her was perfectly disturbing and is, I hope, a foreshadowing of the bizarreness to come at the prison.

The most intriguing part of 43 was the minor Bob character. He's pressed into healing and caring for the mutilated Governor and in so doing is forced to come out his own alcoholic stupor to deal with what could best be described as a nightmare reality, but reality nonetheless. The body posture and facial expression of Bob in the last 2 panels of page 20 is great because to me it appears that he's totally unsure of what he's gotten himself into by saving this man's life. In a way it seems to be a grim acceptance of the situation, while at the same time some measure of awe. By rights the Governor was basically a dead man, but this drunk with practically zero medical experience somehow was able to "resurrect" him and in so doing inadvertently unleashed a demon.

One thing I'd like to point out, is that it wasn't that Bob was such a good medic that suddenly came out of nowhere that saved Governor's life—although he certainly did save his life. The idea is that Michonne was keeping The Governor alive... so she could torture him more. His wounds were bad, but not impossible to heal from.

I wonder if Bob has a larger role to play down the line, or if I'm

off base and he'll settle back into the background where he came from? I can't wait to find out!

Thank you Mr. Kirkman for being true to your characters and their story.

Sincerely,
Corey Sauer

You may in fact see Bob again soon. Stay tuned.

Kirkman;

Damn, man! I almost puked when I saw that "kiss scene" in issue # 43! What the f#&k were you thinking about?? You're sick, you know? Charlie, he's sick too! And Cliff...!

Anyway, keep up the good work. I love this book!

(Shit! Does it mean I am as sick as you...?)

J. J. del Val

I was thinking of ways to make you puke, J.J. I'll obviously have to try harder next time.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just want to start off saying how much this comic rocks. I'm a huge horror/zombie fanatic and just got hooked on this comic 2 years ago, when I went out looking for some good zombie slash horror comic, but all I found was cheesy ones. That was until a friend recommended me to The Walking Dead. I started at issue #24 and was instantly hooked and went out and bought all issues up to date.

I think the thing that got me hooked was the fact that The Walking Dead was a never ending zombie story. The characters were full of emotion and personality, the artwork was amazing and full of detail while the storylines and subplots were nail biting and addictive to read on. Still, I have not up to this date, found a comic book as worthy as this one. I just want to give you a big Kudos and to everyone who works with you.

Thanks!

Now to the comic book, I have a few comments and questions for you...

1) Good job on the ending on issue #42, I was getting tired of seeing the gang in the prison waiting until someone got bitten by a zombie unexpectantly. So when I turned the page to see the Governor back in action my jaw was to the floor and I was so anxious to see the next issue. I just want to beg you to be merciful on all of the characters because at this point I don't want to see anybody leave the comic or turn into a zombie, well except for Patricia.

You're a bit out of luck on that one. Patricia is the only one who survives!

2) Just wanted to thank you for killing off carol. Just curious, why did you make carol the one who does all the weird crazy things? I mean never had I read or seen anything with a character whom tried to kill herself, was so alone she asked to be with a married couple, went into hiding for about a dozen issues, then sleep with someone 20 years younger, then actually successfully kill herself.

Well, I just wanted to show how stressful life in this book actually is and how crazy it can make weaker people. Carol was a pretty weak, dependant person. Things wouldn't work out for people like her in this world.

3) I just don't understand how the people in Woodbury not understand how the Governor isn't a bad guy or at least be suspicious of him. I mean, do they just go and watch the zombie fights and see strangers fighting Zombies and never see them again. Aren't they curious of where all these people are coming from or why they never see them again?

Most of the zombie fights are staged... remember when the two guys fought afterward because the fight was too real? Most of the time two guys get in there and fake fighting surrounded by the zombies. People getting bit was few and far between.

4) I think you should elaborate more on how people can turn into zombies without one biting you, or how this whole mess started in the first place. Was it like a plague or a rapture kind of thing?

Well, that starts to get into the origin of all this stuff, and I think that’s unimportant to the series itself. There will be smaller answers as things progress... but never will we see the whole picture.

5) I why do you still keep the comic in black&white? I mean, if I had to pick whether it could be in color or black and white, I would totally choose color. Not just for the fact of whether I can tell if tyreese is black or white (yeah I had to skip over all the racist crap in previous hack letters) but it would be a hundred times more appealing to read if it was in color.

I disagree. I prefer it in black and white. The covers have enough color for me. I think black and white sets the perfect mood for the series.

To end this off I just want to say again this comic is amazing and one of the best zombie tales in the business. Also, I am looking forward to seeing Rick, his family and friends in many issues to come and keep up the nail biting stories.

Sincerely,
Brooke Kennedy (yes, girls actually read this comic!)

Yay! Girls!

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Big fan from across the pond, Scotland to be exact but that’s enough about me this is about you. I’ve got a few questions that i have to ask my apologies but these aren’t about TWD there about other projects of yours. The walking dead is perfect! well almost i have a request not a question about TWD

1) I know you don’t like to put zombies of real people in your creation but i think you should make an exception for one man. The legend himself (no not Todd Macfarlane) but the grand daddy of zombie horror Mr George A. Romero come on! He deserves it. The man is a god, pay homage to the man who started it all come on!

George has already appeared as a zombie no less than three times in this series. I can’t believe nobody’s noticed.

2) Any insider info on the Haunt project with the great Todd McFarlane (Spawn’s my number one Image comic TWD is a close second, sorry)?

I just got a mess of pages from the artist on the series today. The first issue should be out this summer—look for it!!

3) Finally Marvel Zombies 2, I have only read the first issue and by the time you read this and maybe print it (hint hint) the series will be finished and time may have answered my question but where is Captain America ? I know the Red Skull yanked out his brain but he can’t be really dead. This is Cap were talking about. Marvel my have killed him off in the aftermath of civil war but come on! Keep him alive somewhere by alive i really mean alive-ish.

See the end of issue 3.

Thanks for reading,
Stewart McNaught

P.S. zombie Macfarlane and Romero COME ON !

I’ll see what I can do.

To the crew behind the best title ever:

I have been a fan of zombie movies for eleven to twelve years, and sadly on heard about your series about three months ago. The manager (Matt) at Atomic Comics loved your work, and when I happened to come across the trades he was putting on display, I asked him about the series. He told me that I needed to immediately pick up the first trade, and in the end if I absolutely hated it, then he would buy it from me. I listened and picked up the first trade. I finished reading it in less than two hours that night. I HAD to know what came next. I went first thing the next morning and found the first two hardcovers on the shelf. I bought both, as well as the next two trades and all of the remaining issues that had yet to be collected.

Two days before issue 44 came out, I had re-read the entire series for the SIXTH time. I have never read a series from start

to finish as many times before this. I have to say that I am not a fan of black and white art.... but, I wouldn’t take this book any other way. There has yet to be a point that I thought was dull. I noticed that Jeffrey Gibson wrote in about how slow the book was becoming, and I disagree with him.

Yeah! Right on!

I feel like the book would have suffered if you made them go out on adventures instead of preparing themselves for what was coming, as well as trying to live their lives and retain some sanity. Sure the book would have moved a little faster, but considering the world they are living in, I know that I would rather take things easy, and save my strength. You never know when the group would need me and my hammer. (And yes, I would use a hammer.)

Now, I do have some questions:
1) Do you think you will ever cover the origin? Maybe in a one-shot/ flash-back kind of deal?

You know, never say never. If sales were to plummet and I needed to pay my bills, I can’t say I wouldn’t do “THE WALKING DEAD: ORIGIN” but I really have no plans to. It’s just not important to the story.

2) When the battle is resolved, assuming the Governor lives, will you explain what that creepy kiss was about with his daughter? It looked like he would have slipped her the tongue if Bob wasn’t in the room.

There’s really not much to explain, the Governor is a fucked up dude.

3) Recently I picked up and watched “Land of the Dead”, and I was wondering if Romero had gotten his idea for the “biter” fights from you or was it just a coincedence?

It technically did appear in his flick first... but I figured the execution was different enough that I’d just move ahead as planned. This was something that was planned before the first issue shipped.

Also if you haven’t seen it, it is awesome. My wife loves zombie movies, but I am trying frequently to get her to read your book. If it wasn’t for sequential art, she would dig it. That said:

4) Do you thing you would ever write or have someone else write a novel for the Walking Dead?

No, but I might write one myself.

and finally

5) I’m sure others have said it, but would you please make it into a tv series or movie series at some point? I would love to see the characters on screen.

Me too—only time will tell.

Thank you for the time. I agree that you shouldn’t need to comment anymore on the shipping of the book. I’m just happy that it’s there, and I have no problem re-reading to pass the time-I’m still trying to find the re-occurring zombie mentioned in the hard cover.

-Jake Combs

Well, we are always late, but we still put out more comics in a year than a ton of other series, I mean... a ton. So there is cause to complain, we don’t hit our exact dates... but we’ve still made it to issue 46 in just a hair over four years.

With that, I leave you!

See you back here very soon for another rip-roaring installment of THE WALKING DEAD!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hiya Folks,

Another pulse-pounding issue, leading to the most insane and unexpected climax from the “No One is Safe” storyline.

- Sina Grace

Whoa, intense, huh?

Yeah, I think after this issue you guys can really get a sense of just how much things will be changing after this arc. Big things are in store for this book. These are very exciting times for all of the creative team. I hope you guys are digging it.

Not a lot of time for chatting here—so I’ll dive right into the mail.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I started picking up the TWD trades about six months ago, after coming back to comics early last year. Three weeks ago I caught up, bought issue 43, and added ‘Dead’ to my reserve box. Wednesday, 44 was waiting for me and it was sweet indeed. I knew there would be some kind of battle...but I never expected the Governor to have to turn tail and run. And man, Andrea just gets more and more bad-ass. In fact, it’s a testament to your storytelling prowess that I was so concerned about her...that I completely forgot to worry about Rick.

And now the insinuation is you’re going to kill him.

I know you’re really good with plot twists, but for the life of me I can’t figure out which way you’re going to go with this. Either way — if he lives or dies — I have no doubt the story will be typically engaging, emotional, and riveting...

But please don’t kill Rick.

Come on.

From the last two letters pages it seems some people have a problem with his sometimes-rigidly-enforced leadership. Personally, I never thought Rick overstepped his bounds. If anything it’s when he’s begun to believe this himself and allow others to make big decisions that things have usually gone horribly wrong. But even if he sometimes gets a little bitchy...

Don’t kill Rick.

I’m not going to stop collecting or anything (at least I doubt it) if you do, but...man...I’ll be sad. I mean, the guy just had a kid.

Come on.

All that pining over a fictional character...is directly due to the team on this book. I just want you to know I consider the characters in TWD to be the most realistically drawn (in both senses) and best-written characters in “genre comics” today.

(There might be some romance/emo-notebook/satire thing out there with better characterization, but I don’t read that crap.)

(nor should you.)

And I have to second Karith Cashion’s comments from the last lettercol. All you Grade A comics scribes are killing us. There’s just too much talent out there. What with You, the Powers Guy, the Scary British Somnabulist Fetishist, The Cap-Killer, The Irreverent Irish Shit-Kicker (not to mention the Buffy Guy, the Spies, Sex, & Skullshirt Guy, and the Last-Man-Currently-On-The-Picket-Line) I have very little time to do housework or listen

to charming stories about my friends’ children or to complain about politics or reality TV or the religious right...

I can’t figure out who you’re talking about.

Wait...Oh...I guess I should thank you...

So...

Thanks for my favorite comic, (and seriously, don’t kill Rick.)

JB Love
Savannah, Ga

PS

Hey — if these characters last long enough, it would be really cool to see them make their way down here to Savannah. Our historic district would look great crawling with Charlie Adlard zombies...

I’ll see what we can do about getting down to Savannah.

Now, regarding your comments on Rick... I can’t really comment. The arc is called “no one is safe” so there’s that... and what better way to illustrate that absolutely NO ONE is safe. Of course—why would I be so adamantly hinting at something coming up in the book? Wouldn’t that just spoil things? Or maybe I’m trying to throw you off... or maybe, just maybe... he’ll suffer a fate WORSE than death... Christ—who knows. I will say... the arc ends next issue... so all answers are contained therein.

Dear Mr Kirkman,
Thank you for writing the most addicting, and best zombie comic ever. I’m only curious about one thing. I was re-reading the first volume, and I realized that the escaped convict that shot rick putting him in a coma resembles Axel a lot. Is it a coincidence, or will that be brought up later, if axel was the escaped convict? Thanks for being awesome.

-Dylan Goldman

Pure coincidence... they really don’t look THAT much alike. Axel isn’t missing any teeth, I believe. It’s just like Doctor Stephens, mentioned in issue 2, and Doctor Stevens from Woodbury. The first is named after my family doctor when I was a child... the other is named after none other than Terry Stevens, my friend and artist on a few of my early projects like Battle Pope Presents: Saint Michael.

Dear Robert & Crew

I’ll try and keep this brief as I wrote a long brown nosing letter to Invincible today also. Walking Dead, amazing, awesome, always spectacular yadda yadda. Now onto my question. I’ve thought (And I’m sure others also) that a The Walking Dead TV series would be possibly the greatest serial drama/thriller ever. What’s your opinion on this and do you think it would ever happen?

Thanks, keep up the fudging excellent quality.

ReZourceman
Michael Jamieson,

All I can really say is that I’m ALL FOR IT. I can’t guarantee it will ever happen, but I’d sure like it to. Who knows? Maybe some day. I often times get emails that say “have you ever considered making it a TV show on HBO?” Well... it’s not really up to ME or it would have premiered years ago. So yeah... I’d love for it to happen, but I’d also do my best to make sure it was AWESOME.

Hey Kirkman,
I just read twd 44 loved it, bit of an anti climax but I'm sure they'll be back. I loved seeing the gov all pissed off after Andrea took out half his men seeing him punch that fat guy out of anger was funny. I was so worried for Andrea after seeing the cover to 44 the group really need her skills as a marksmen because Glenn can't shoot for shit. Rick is a dead man no one survives being gut shot like that and with their crude medical supplies he's fucked unless the blood is misleading and he's only been grazed. I hope so. Rick deserves a better death than that.

People have survived similar injuries... I promise. Still, though... it remains to be seen if Rick will.

It really shows that you've thought of every angle to make it as real as possible. The fact that the gov didn't all of a sudden show up with a swat team but a bunch of rag tag redneck survivors who can't shoot. Has he brought everyone from woodbury to fight?

Most of them.

You seem to dig criticism so here goes a couple of the wd trades I've bought mainly Volume 3 and 7 look like they were printed using a very crude photocopier the gray tones are so bad when you compare them to my single issues. Have you seen any like this? Also Invincible volume 8 was the same any comment?

Frankly, Quebecor, the top printer in the country, who printed these trades, has kind of gone downhill. It's something that really frustrates me, because I've been using them since my self-publishing days. Now, I thought copies that were that bad hadn't made it to circulation. A recent reprinting of Volume 3 got printed TWICE by Quebecor before we had to move it to another printer because they just couldn't seem to print something that didn't look like crap. If you got your hands on a bad book, or two, chances are—they're not all like that. You should be able to return it to your retailer for a good copy. I apologize for the inconvenience. Unfortunately, in most cases, I get five copies to look over, and make sure are well-printed... before the whole run ships out, and so there's always the possibility that I'm seeing the BEST of the run, which is frustrating.

Anyway, I believe the problem is fixed now. We'll see.

Also compared to the Invincible trades The TWD trades are boring! No introductions, no rough sketches or behind the scenes character designs! All stuff us twd fans would love. How's about a pin up section in the twd singles like in Invincible?

Well, both books are by me, but I decided to try a different approach with TWD, which came out AFTER Invincible. With TWD, I try to make the trades the basic story—that's all you get. With the issues you get letters columns, like this one, and bonus stories like the Christmas tale that ran in issue 32—or wherever, which isn't in a TPB. I just wanted to try something different—and this book sells better! Now, there are next to ZERO sketches done for this series... most characters are designed on the page, there's no costumes to design or space ships or whatever like there is with Invincible, so there's not as much to share—so it makes sense to do this with the TPBs.

Now, as far as pin-ups go... I decided before the book shipped that I would never run pin-ups in this series. The reason for this is that it seemed like a very serious book to me, and I figured ALL the pin-ups would be random zombie drawings or even goofy little drawings featuring the characters doing funny stuff... and I felt that would undercut the tone of the series. So I decided not to run any pin-ups... and every pin-up I've ever been offered has been a random zombie drawing or a funny strip or illustration.

That's all I can find wrong with my favorite comic ever. I just got a special edition of night of living dead with a great documentary called reflections of the dead. Half of the actors in notld were shareholders and collaborators on the film. Did you know George Romero's first company was called Latent Image? Cool, eh?

I didn't know that—what a weird coincidence.

More zombie covers please?

I'll do what I can, I know Charlie likes selling the original art to covers with zombies on it. Wait until you see the cover to 51—it's AWESOME!

Thanks for listening.
Scott Spencer
UK.

P.S. Kirkman for president

Give it time.

Hello Mr Kirkman!

I like your comic very much, it has the best character developement and story of any comic I've read.

I've always loathed superhero comics and grew up with mainly underground comics, heavy metal and 2000AD as a kid so your comic fits me like a latex gimpsuit!

That's what I've always set out to achieve. GREAT mental image...

First and foremost I have to make an ugly confession of a crime for which I have no excuse good enough. I'm stealing your comic through the internet instead of ordering it from America and would probably never have started reading it if I didn't find it on the internet in the first place. Sorry for stealing the food from your baby's mouth! But this makes me think about something, would it perhaps be possible to start buying scans of your comic from your company's site in the future so I could support you without having to pay for overpriced imports? We don't have a local comic book guy either.

I'm currently exploring options for digital comics. It's something I'm very interested in.

Now for some questions, some of which you've probably already answered somewhere. Your letter pages are the first comic letter pages I've ever bothered to read, but I've got memory like a goldfish.

1) Do you guys that work with the book ever decide to make some zombies look like people you don't like in real life?

Not that I'm aware of. Although, Charlie does seem to draw ME as a zombie in almost every issue... so it's a bit unsettling.

2) What are your top 5 favorite supernatural creatures?

Um... Zombies, Werewolves, Vampires, God and Spider-Man. Heh.

3) Do you sometimes yell a your letters when reading a question from a fan that you've seen at least a hundred times before?

Not often.

4) Do you like mudkips? I like mudkips.

No clue what a mudkip is.

5) Did you play a lot of dungeons and dragons when you were young?

Nope. I've never played it. Tony Moore and I played a lot of Vampire: The Masquerade.

As for comments, uh... I don't really have any, not my biz to tell you how to run your comic. However, I think a very unexpected twist would be if Rick and Tyreese became a gay couple, or if your killed off everyone and the story became all about the governor or if Michone's other personality became a zombie and she tried to eat people.

I've considered the gay couple thing...

It took me a full sixpack of beer to amount enough courage to write this letter so I'd appreciate it if you decided to print it!

Fakename Obvious
From Schweden

I assume that's what we call over here, "Sweden" right? Unless that's a new country invented by Wayne Campbell?

Hey Kirkman,

I'm loving the series, keep up the amazing character development. In issue 44 the letter section said it's time to go from race to "extreme hatred of religion." I figured I'd write in as I'm someone who strives to follow Jesus (the son of God) but also hates religion. I don't mean to offend anyone, my POV is that Jesus hoped to break down the idea of religion, not start a new one. No matter anyone's belief I figured all fans of the Walking Dead series would be interested in what it says in Matthew 27:52-53 (any translation). It's one of the things most Sunday school classes would skip. Every time I read it, my reaction is always the same: WHAT!?! Enjoy.

Tyler Goodison

London, Ontario

P.S. If you print this thanks for the soapbox. If not, at least I got to point out the scripture to you and to let you know there is one more person in the world who enjoys your work

I don't have a bible... but I do have the internet. Zombies in the Bible. AWESOME.

Dear God of Comics,

THAT'S how you start a letter. Nice.

I just finished issue 44.. I must say, I was very happy with it (except Rick getting shot of course). In the back you mentioned that this would be a story arc to bring us through to issue 48. And that there would be a lot of changes. I can see this possibly going one of two ways (or maybe a way that I just don't anticipate, which is always nice). One, you could have Michonne go out with a small group, or by herself, and slaughter the sadistic leader of the group which could lead to everyone staying at the jail after he is gone. OR, you could have the other group win and everyone have to find a new place to live after they get kicked out of the jail, or worse be entertainment for the others.

Also, I am a HUGE zombie fanatic... and TWD is by far my favorite comic. You have taken the zombie genre to a whole new level. Unfortunately I got into TWD in the 30's. I have been scrambling to by the back issues, because let's face it, having the trades is nice but the comics you LOVE you want to own the issues individually. So you know, if you have any of those coveted first printing number ones I have a birthday coming up (wink wink).

Heh... I do have every issue, but you know... if I gave them to you—I'd have to share with the whole class.

I also have a question/comment to add before I wrap this up. As you are nearing issue 50, have you thought about a possible end in sight for the book? Or a rough estimate on how many more issues you see in the future? Personally though, I would like to see the book go on for as long as it can.. I don't want it to end any time soon.

I better see this in an issue (hehe j/k),
Jessica Mikesch

I guess now is as good a time as any to update people on the status of this books life. I just got sales figures for 49, and it's another jump in sales, but we haven't been gaining every single issue like we did for the first 40 issues or so. We've kind of his a level, or are only going up slightly... but that's still amazing. If we started losing readers at a slow rate (which is what 99% of comics do) we could probably still make it until 150 before things started looking ugly. So sales-wise we're good. And we're not dropping in sales yet... and our trade paperback collections continue to outsell the majority of Marvel and DC TPBs. The Walking Dead Volume 6 was number 7 on the top 100 graphic novels of 2007 and Volume 7 was number 10. All the other volumes placed on the list, all pretty high as I recall... so we're doing great. Now, as far as I know, Charlie and Cliff are still having a blast, but I won't speak for them.

For me... I can't believe I'm already writing issue 50. That's amazing for me. I feel like I'm writing issue 5, I'm still very jazzed about doing this book, and I see a long, LONG road ahead of me on the series.

Dear Kirkman,

Not much to this issue really. Just...bang, blam, run for your lives! I wouldn't say I didn't enjoy it but, if everything is gonna change soon, then by all means! Wish I had more to say, just, same old same old; and yeah I know my letters haven't been that great recently either.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yeah, your letters kind of blow, I mean... they're a bit stilted, they only take a second to read, and they don't come in with any kind of regularity. I guess I'll keep reading them. I guess.

Dear Irredeemable Kirk-man,

I enjoy your books. They are good. They are well written and the art is pretty. End of praise.

Questions!

1 - If The Walking Dead was a colour, what would that colour smell like?

What's a "colour?"

2 - A doctor tells you have three days to live, but they will be the best three days of your life - Do you laugh or cry?

Cry.

3 - You are fighting an enraged elephant - how do you win?

Body slam.

4 - If, for whatever reason, TWD becomes the next big thing, how far would you sell out? Would we see Zombie Pez Dispensers? Rick's Hand Lunchboxes? Governor Underroos?

All of the above. And I would also hire some ghost-writer to write the book for me while I retire to my giant money bin to admire my lucky dime. Spats.

5 - Will we ever see colour in between the TWD covers? I'm think a symbolic splash of red or something like that at a major major turning point.

Not interested in doing things like that.

6 - Zombies with guns - when?

Never. Romero's evolving zombies are his spin. Mine just keep rotting.

Up with the good work keep,
Uther Dean

Writing for thanks.

Kirkman-
First of all thanks for reading my previous letter and responding to it. I was excited that you did. Thank you!

Secondly I didn't mean to be confusing in my letter. My boyfriend, Jon, was a soldier training for his second tour in Iraq and passed away from meningitis. I'm sorry if I was misleading I didn't mean to be casual about his death but he always told me if he didn't come home from Iraq alive that I should be prepared to find a zombie at my door one day. When you are afraid for someone all the time, everyday, the only thing that keeps you going is laughter. I didn't mean to be casual because its the most awful thing I've ever dealt with and so many things about it piss me off but I didn't write to unload on you. When you wrote about losing your friend I was thinking of how angry I am too sometimes, I'm angry that I'll never laugh with him again or get to wake up in the mornings snuggled but because of him I still laugh everyday so I try to think of that. I don't know that you will miss the snuggling part so much with your friend, but....well maybe?

Sadly, no. But I guess I can see where you're coming from. I just can't relate to that. I'm sorry if my response seemed insensitive.

Our humor and love of all things zombie was a big part of us.

Sorry I rambled a lot but while I was excited to see you had responded I was also upset that I was not clear enough in my first letter. I didn't want to fill up your mailbox explaining myself, but I felt like I needed to. Next time I promise to only write in with thought provoking questions and praise for how truly amazing you are.

Well, that's really NOT what I prefer but thanks. Thought provoking questions, yet... but praise about how truly amazing I am falls on deaf ears. I hear that shit all the time from my entourage and bevy of beautiful women who are always hounding me. I'm kind of numb to it now.

Anyways, I really only started to write to you the first time because you liked Passions, I got giddy and the ADD part of me kicked in as I was typing... thinking about zombies makes me think about Jon and thinking about Jon makes me think about zombies....

I understand.

I hope this letter has made a little more sense, if not oh well I can't help it if I'm a little crazy....

Thanks again for everything you guys do.
Brandy

Thanks for writing to explain yourself. I was just a bit confused, so thanks for clearing things up.

BTW- I am upset that Passions was canceled now I don't know what to watch when I have sick days.

Just avoid the daytime talk shows like the plague—those things are crazy. Most any soap opera these days is confusing in the most intriguing ways. I forget which one it was but there was 40 characters, about 8 plots handled between commercial breaks and there was all kinds of shit going on with a long lost dad, a woman at the docks trying to blackmail a dude, a police officer being double-crossed and I think there were aliens.

I’ve got to admit... if this comic thing ever dries up for me—I really, REALLY would like to write for a soap opera... so if anyone is reading this...

Dear Mr kirkman,

You sir are a FUCKER! I hate you so much, I love you! I can only imagine how many e-mails you are going to receive about this months issue # 45. I consider myself a pretty tuff guy but this is tearing me up inside, I can’t believe a fucking comic is pulling my strings like this! You KILLED my favorite character or the words exactly “ so I blew her FUCKING brains out ” words can’t describe the pain swirling inside my very soul, AHHHHHHHHHH!

I will always continue to spread the gospel on this amazing book and I hope it never stops,

Robert Flesch,

P.S. and since I got your attention I also love your ultimate x-men Great read there also!

Thanks, glad you like Ultimate X-Men. On the Michonne thing—I can’t believe you fell for it! Don’t worry—she’s okay... for now.

You have a great horror comic book here, you know that, so I won’t rant and rave about it. I just have one question. When is the video game? Just to let you know I interviewed a real zombie named Dead Pete. He claims he went to Haiti, dated some girl and then jilted her. Her father a shaman, injected him with something in a nightclub, made him into a zombie slave, and that he worked on a plantation for 6 months, until he got out of his zombie state. He wanted me to personally interview him, but claims he has lesions all over his body. I said, “no, I rather just interview you over the phone.”

Paul Dale Roberts

Good call... and crazy story. Do you have photos? Weird stuff. Video game? Who knows... maybe never. I’m certainly open to the idea.

I swear to fucking god, if you have michonne go out on a punk ass boba fett-esque death with a gunshot to the head, I will fucking scream, and never stop screaming until my goddamn lungs explode and then they’ll have to send me issues of the Walking Dead to me in the hospital, lest i aggravate my condition horribly by ruining my newly sutured lungs. Seriously, i’m on fucking pins and needles here Kirkman, your book is too good for my health. Stop putting that heroin into the ink, i know you do, cause i’m sick, and it’s bad.

-Adam

She’s okay. I promise... no Fett-Death for her.

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

The dialog seemed very stilted this issue, like every character was rattling off a prepared monologue. That said, it wasn’t so bad—there were some major happenings. I’ve seen in Previews that there’s an issue where everyone is Dead And Buried...what then, do they all come back as zombies, too? Maybe I never thought to ask but, is this book black and white for any particular reason? Would you produce it in color if you could? I think the one real drawback to black and white is with the hair color...How Lucille Balle ever became famous as a readhead on a black and white show, I’ll never know. By the way, this issue I’d rank last out of the four comics I read today.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Well, when we first started out, one of the reasons I made the book black and white was for cost. Not the MAIN reason, or even close to it, but I figured, y’know—if the book is meant to last for a good long time, I could probably make it to issue 25 even if sales were bad if it was black and white. Also, the book has a lot of GORE, in black and white gore is much more acceptable. See Kill Bill. So I figured we might reach a wider audience in black and white.

Also, Night of the Living Dead was black and white... and as mentioned in the Deluxe Hardcover... this book was originally pitched as a Night of the Living Dead comic, because that title is in the public domain.

Now, I could TOTALLY afford to make this book color, but y’know what... it just wouldn’t be the same for me. So sorry... no color... ever. The only time I’d ever do it, is if this book came to an end while still successful, and the TPBs were selling huge, but then died out. I’d wait a few years, and then MAYBE... MAYBE do color collections. But I really don’t like the idea of seeing the pages in color.

Like usual I had missed comic Wed. for about three or four weeks in a row and by the time I cleaned out my file I have about 40-something books to sort through. But lucky me since I have Buffy, Invincible and TWD mixed in with various X-Men (yes, Ultimate X-Men as well) titles and Initiative and Countdown crap. I have read through almost everything by now and like usual I always find TWD at the very bottom of the stack. I have finally come to the conclusion that I’m afraid to read this book. Yep, I admit it in plain print. I am a complete pansy when it comes to opening up the cover of this title because thanks to all of your superb characterization I have come to know and love each one of your characters (well, I am kinda glad Carol bit it. She was a complete nutter).

Yeah, she kinda lost it.

As I stare at the cover of issue 44 I am wondering who is gonna make through these pages alive. I was very relieved with what you did with issue 43 because I wasn’t sure if I was ready to deal. I know the story must go on, but I don’t know if I’m ready to leave the prison behind. I was starting to like it there. It had become my safe haven. Well, Kirkman.....wish me luck here. I’m gonna bite the bullet and get this over with. I would rather be getting a root canal than have to read this damn book.

Khicks
Dayton, Ohio

Uh... thanks. I think.

Mr. Kirkman,

First off, thanks for the series. It is not getting repetitive or dull. Here are my suggestions for Rick’s arm:

- 1.) A skeleton key. With this he can open any lock any time, and anywhere.
- 2.) A pacifier. So that when he’s making love to Lori and the baby cries, he can plug its mouth while he plugs his wife. (only new parents can appreciate this)
- 3.) A pen. Because the pen is mightier than the sword. Ok that was just dumb. Forget that one.

Uh... thanks. I think.

Also, Michonne is not dead, I don’t believe that husky prick! But when her and Tyreese surprise them you can clearly see she was aiming right for his pudgy head. How did he not suffer from a severed head? And I swear this guy got fatter in the last few issues (he’s like the Hurley of TWD, but bad). This is unprecedented, how does someone gain weight in an apocalyptic world like this? And how the hell did Andrea miss a target like him?

She wasn’t aiming for HIM.

And furthermore, why don’t the characters refer to these dead stinks as zombies? I think it’s obvious that 1.) they eat people and 2.) they are dead and rotting corpses that walk. Seems pretty frickin’ obvious to me that anybody harboring these two basic characteristics would be a zombie. I mean, if evil creatures appeared only at night and drank only blood showed up in this world to wreak havoc, I don’t think it would take me two seconds to figure out they were vampires. I wouldn’t call them ‘neck biters’ or something retarded like that.

Just a thought. I hope this letter stands out enough to be published.

Thanks,
Manny Lerma

Well, the term has appeared in the book before... but for the most part, I think using that term all the time seems weird. Because that term comes exclusively from the movies. I mean, the term existed—but not in the way that Romero zombies are. And nobody in this comic is talking about seeing Day of the Dead or Shaun of the Dead or whatever. So I try to use the term sparingly. I think people would make nicknames for them like biters or roamers... that’s just

what people do.

Michonne dead...obviously the Governor hasn't heard of the Chewbacca gambit. Also, that henchman is really fat. I'm sure some of it's hereditary, but statistically speaking, that dude's gonna get got by diabetes or heart disease for a zombie does him in. Someone should really say something to him.

He's trying man... it's not as easy to lose weight as most people think. He tries to hit the gym—but it always seems like something is getting in the way and he doesn't have time. And he'll go like an entire damn week eating good and then cave in and order a pizza on Saturday or eat a delicious burger from Hardee's when friends come over. It's an ongoing struggle, but it's hard enough just to keep from gaining weight most weeks and he's... er... he's... nevermind.

Happy Holidays,
Jeff Janczyk

PS-Big Ups to Brian Keene! Just finished Dead Sea, and it was a pretty good read. It had a zombie whale. Spooky.

Fuck—a zombie WHALE?! I need to read that damn book!

Hi Robert,

Thanks for printing my letter in issue 45. You don't know how much pussy that's gonna get me?

None.

That's a lie.

No kidding.

But it was a great issue, and it totally solidified the suspicion that Walking Dead is the reason I read comics. The major thrill of the medium, for me at least, is less about superheroes or cool art or whatever, and more about the excitement of serialized storytelling. Unless you count soap operas, where else but comics can you be part of a story that could literally go on forever? And the serialized thrills of the Walking Dead are so much better than other comics because there's real change here every month. People die. People leave. People are left with 50% fewer hands. That kind of upheaval just doesn't happen to iconic characters in corporate titles. It's not like DC would up and decide to give Bruce Wayne a wooden leg.

Pirate Batman!

I guess that's why I buy the monthly issues as opposed to the trades, and I guess that's why it's the first comic I read from the stack. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Now kill off that prison doctor and see what kind of hell breaks loose the next time someone needs urgent medical care. The thought of Axel having to perform crude surgery with instructions he read out of a "For Dummies" book makes me salivate.

Keep up the good work,
Kid Kaos

Axel isn't going to be doing much of anything after THIS issue. And sorry about that, by the way... he was a favorite of mine too.

Man,

I just got caught up on Issue #45 and all I can say is what will you throw at us next? Anyone else about the join the ranks of the undead? How long do you think this series will run? I apologize in advance if you've already addressed this in a previous message but I am a relatively new fan. I started in October and just began devouring (no pun intended) TWD.

George

Issue 50 is the last issue. (kidding)

Kirklard Rathton,
I'm dead. Officially. Your book just killed me.

Man, Michonne????!!! WHY MICHONNE????!!! I want to keep thinking that I can't trust that dude Gabe at all when he says he shot her, but STILL!

Sucker!

And Tyreese in the clutches of the vile Governor! When will this all end?

Issue 50. (kidding again)

Commence numbered questions.

1) Can't remember if you've seen this but if not you should totally rent (or BUY) the "UNDEAD" DVD. It'll help when the aliens arrive in Issue #75 (only 30 more to go!!!). I saw the movie back in 2003 with my zombie crew and I loved it. Three words. Zom. Bie. Fish.

Yeah, Undead is a special kind of awesome. Great, GREAT goddamn movie!

2) I've read your IGN interviews of late and there was a lot of talk about Invincible in the Image Universe and how he interacts with other characters like Savage Dragon, etc. Where does TWD fall in terms of universes?

It is its own place. Assume it's the real world—and zombies broke out. It is completely unconnected to the Invincible Universe—where Brit, The Astounding Wolf-Man, Capes, Tech Jacket and Invincible all take place.

3) OH SNAP! Kirkmania.com is up and running! Can't wait for the rest of the site to get worked out. And as a side-note, I love the mini-Kirkman drawing. I vaguely remember Ottley doing several characters in that caricature style but can't remember where. Don't you wish you had a plush mini-Kirkman doll at home?

I've considered making plush dolls, because to me, it seems SO narcissistic that it's FUNNY... but I think it would make most people think I'm a total ASSHOLE, but I thought about it so seriously that I almost had a prototype made. And those caricatures of me are drawn by young Nate Bellegarde, who is drawing Invincible Presents: Atom Eve... and BRIT starting with issue 7.

4) It's the holidays and I can imagine that after a Zombie Apocalypse they take on an extra-special significance. You know... Egg nog. Brains. Loved Ones. Brains. Presents. Chestnuts and Brains roasting on an open fire. But it makes me miss Morgan and Duane all the more...seeing as we last saw them in the Image 2005 Christmas Special. Please. Throw us a bone here. Morgan and Duane still around? Duane's batteries had to have run out by now, right? And if not, he's gotta be TOTALLY done with those games. Please give us some clue. Please, Kirkman, it's the holidays. Do it for the children.

Duane's probably not playing a whole lot of Gamboy these days. We will see them again... some day.

Well, again, you da man. Happy Holidays. Can't wait for Walking Dead AND Invincible #50!!! Crazy, huh?

Very crazy.

I'm going to bed. With visions of TWD Hardcover Vol. 3 in my head.

Good night,
Dan "Kentucky" Benningfield

PS The letters you printed of mine in Wolf-Man and Invincible have made me the coolest Kirkman fanboy in all of Comicazi-land. The guys at the store loved it. Thanks for bringing joy to this nerd's heart. Now maybe if you'd print this, the circle would be complete, as they say.

Circle complete.

Okay kids, that's all we have time for this month. I'll see you all back here very soon.

Until then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello All,

I don't know what's crazier- Lori's death, or four letters in a row from Scott Spencer.

- Sina Grace

Issue 48—not really much for me to say after this one, other than—I'm glad we finally got to this issue and I can't wait until you guys see where we go from here.

Exciting times.

Hello Robert,

I just wanted to say I'm not one of the fans that has been with you since the beginning. I'm one of the guys that was drawn to your books through- word of mouth.

People always seem to apologize for this. At this point, two thirds of our readership came on after the first six issues of this series—and if you count the trades—there's still people just starting to read the book. It's nothing to apologize for—I think it's awesome. You're here now—that's all that matters.

Invincible is great. We all know it. But the reason I'm writing you is to tell you this. I've been getting TWD in trades. Well, the last trade THE CALM BEFORE vol 7 was SO DAMN GOOD that after reading that I had to pick up the issues. I just couldn't wait another 5-6 months to find out what happens. That's good story telling there and kudos to you.

Thanks for taking the plunge.

#44 and 45. To say that I'm enjoying these issues is like saying, 'a person *might* need oxygen to live.' They're good stuff.

One other thing. Last year I was rereading my Savage Dragon collection and I saw a letter of yours printed in Savage Dragon 74.

Garland Skowronski

I did in fact have a letter printed in that issue—I believe that's the ONLY letter I've ever had printed in a comic before. I suppose it helps that I already knew Larsen a little bit by that point.

Dear Walking Dead:

Tonight was zombie night for me. After reading The Walking Dead #45 and wishing that Dale, Glenn and Andrea didn't take off in that RV. Hell, they are needed, what the hell were they thinking? Living people need not wander about, they need to be altogether and fight off these living dead carcasses! Anyway, where was I? Oh ha, after reading this issue, I went to see a good zombie movie called "I Am Legend" with Will Smith. The zombies

in this movie are fast moving, not your typical slow moving zombie. There were two sad parts in this movie. When the dog was transforming and Will had to strangle the dog. Then when *****deleted because I wouldn't want to spoil things for anyone who hasn't seen the movie*****. Now that I have read your comic book and saw this outstanding movie, I went ahead and rented 'Plague of the Zombies 1966 - about a voodoo cult in a Cornish village; Psychomania - about some motorcycle riding zombies; Toxic Zombies 1980 - the government sprays marijuana fields with a pesticide that makes the dope farmers become zombies. Yep! It's zombie night, I love dead people!

Paul Dale Roberts

You really picked some winners. Were you on a planet where Day of the Dead had been wiped from existence? Have another Zombie Night and watch Day of the Dead, Shaun of the Dead and Undead... you'll thank me later.

Hey,

I just have to tell you Mr. Kirkman that TWD is truly the comic I have been waiting for all my life. I love apocalyptic stories where people have to band together and figure out a way to survive under outrageous circumstances. I'm sure you've read Max Brooks "World War Z", but before that he wrote "The Zombie Survival Guide". I've read it twice. My husband doesn't read as much as me, but we can finally bond over your comic. We get the trades every few months and read them together. They make for great dinner conversation. We love comparing ourselves to the characters in TWD. We even have our own zombie fall-out shelter. Our large attic is filled with camping gear, winter clothes, even extra toys and books to distract the kids during that long wait after the initial panic. Lucky for us it's one of those pull-down stairs type, and it comes down into our enclosed food pantry. And our best advantage... My husband's a gun salesman. After all, luck favors the prepared.

Sounds like you're set.

I didn't even know there was this letter forum until I picked up issue #44 & 45, because I just couldn't wait any longer. I love hearing what other fans have to say now. However there were a lot of mentions about the racist rants and rape complaints people were apparently writing in about. That stuff had never even crossed my mind. I mean it's FICTION people! I must confess I never really liked Michonne though after she became a home wrecker. I thought it was just her bad Karma when she was captured by the Gov. I mean poor Carol was so clueless compared to the touch chic. She just didn't stand a chance. Michonne won me back though after she went after the Gov. and his crew of baddies. She actually managed to make Tyreese look like a wuss with the way she plunged ahead. I know or at least hope that she is not dead. That would suck. Seriously

suck!

Home wrecker's a little harsh—it's not like Tyreese and Carol were married or anything.

One question though... Who were those zombies Michonne had chained behind her when she first appeared in the story? I've always had a feeling that they had been people she knew and she had kept them around for company. Am I right?

That was her boyfriend and her boyfriend's best friend. It was vaguely hinted at in the story.

Thank you for writing such an amazing and EPIC story. My husband and I will continue to read with enthusiasm, and my 7 year old daughter will continue to sneak peeks as well.

Your well-prepared fan,
Amanda Maynard

Thanks for reading—and remember, when the zombies come—I'm going to need your address.

Hey Kirkman,

I just read The Walking Dead 45 and The Astounding Wolf-Man 4 and I think they are up there with some of the best single issues of all time! Plus I had 2 letters printed in Wolf-Man 4. I'm the goon Simpsons guy. I can't believe you went on the net to google something I mentioned, sweet! Anyway I never thought you and Adlard could top issue 32 but 45 is my fave twd so far. God, I hope that fat guy was lying about killing Michonne, she rules. The scene where Lori was telling Carl about how brave Rick is put a lump in my throat. I really care about these guys. The cover to twd 45 was reminiscent of The Astounding Wolf-Man 4 cover, pretty cool. I love that Dale and Andrea, my girl, have left for a while. I can't wait to see where they go.

1. Any chance Dale and company might run into Duane Jones and his dad? Nice little homage to Ben from notld.

It's possible, but not likely. The problem is it's pretty unrealistic for someone to just stumble upon someone else in this great big world of ours. Rick finding Lori and Carl made sense because he was on the exact same path as them. Finding someone at random—pretty impossible.

2. Tyreese will never break or rat out his friends which can only mean more torture are you worried your setting yourself up for more bullshit racist accusations?

Sure, but it's not going to make me rethink my writing and change things just out of fear of a few letters. That would make the book suck. I've already gotten a bunch of mail for issue 46 (will probably run some later in this column) and so far... I haven't seen any negative response to what happened.

3. I still haven't gotten my twd t-shirt is there a delay?

Not that I'm aware of. They're sitting in stock at the distributor—your retailer has only but to place an order.

Surely you've realized by now a Science Dog comic would sell like hot cakes so when's it coming out? I need a Cory Walker fix. You and Bendis are the future of comics, the quality of your books is amazing. So here's to 2008 being a year full of great Kirkman books.

Happy New Year, pal.

Scott Spencer

For the time being, Science Dog will only be 12-page back-up stories in every 25th issue of Invincible. The next one is coming up on Invincible

50, which should be on sale shortly after this issue is released. Cory and I would both like to do more Science Dog, but his schedule and mine just won't allow it.

The future, Bendis! We're the future!

Hi Kirkman,
The Walking Dead 45 was pure gold. The best issue yet! I can partly agree with Dale about leaving, I mean, is the prison worth dying over? Then again wherever they set up home they'll always be at risk from desperados unless they trek into some mountains and live off the land Cruoso style. Witch I think is a good idea. You can always live off the land especially in America. Saying that, the prison is really well guarded unless they've got tanks—oh wait. God I care about these people when you've followed this book religiously for a couple years you really share their highs and lows. I was really overjoyed and relieved when Judith was born healthy and not devoured in utero by rotten folk. Also, not knowing if Michonne is alive or dead is killing me. She was always a bit off an outsider in the group, but seeing her come together with the group to fight the Woodbury goons was proof of how great she is. Dale's foolish for putting the kids in a van meters away from the dead and thinking he's saving them. I love the Mad Max 2 element of this book. Man would revert back to beastly basics ready to wage war for a tank of gas or your digs. Hershel is delusional after all his suffering. He still thinks there's a beardy twat in the sky looking out for him. Sorry, I despise religion. I blame it for every war man has fought. TWD is the one book I can't live without so keep 'em coming.

Scott Spencer

Thanks for writing in Scott—wow, two letters in a row. I can't help but get the sense that your two letters still haven't quite covered all your thoughts—you think maybe, oh wait—okay...

Hi Kirkman,
I think The Walking Dead is about to get crazy I've thought about how fucking huge and epic it would be if an issue ended with a radio transmission from a government or army official and I realized how truly special this book is. Its way bigger than just some creator owned indie comic. I believe you're on par with Romero. What I'd give to see you two collaborate on a project!

Hey—me too. All George has to do is call.

1. Have you seen diary of the dead yet? I'm counting the days.

I have not. It's not playing in my area yet—but as soon as it is—I'll be sure to check it out.

One numbered question, huh? You're getting lazy.

Adlard's covers are smoking! I love the red colours used for the war arc please let Tyreese survive being beheaded saying that his balls seemed to be in Michonne's handbag in 45. Michonne says jump, Tyreese says "how high?"

TWD rules the comic world.

Scott Spencer

Yeah, I guess Tyreese was a bit neutered in his last scenes—but Michonne is just that strong-willed a person... and Tyreese was a bit out of his element. You done writing letters now? Oh... nevermind.

Hi Kirkman,
I just saw the cover to TWD 49, and it smokes! It's gotta be one of my favorites. Carl really is a tough little survivor. I suppose it's akin to children in warzones,

death all around, literally for Carl. I suppose you'd become numb to the violence. He's had to grow up fast and poor Judith, a childhood is out of the question!

Yeah—no kidding.

At least rick and company can take comfort in their memories Judith's first sounds were a saw hacking through bone and screams. It makes me think of the Terminator mythos and kids that were born after the machines had taken over. I'm not sure I like your vision for the future of this book. You know, a couple of survivors in a cabin where they hardly ever see a zombie. It's like you've gone off zombie action. I mean, soap stuffs cool and all but only because they're surviving a zombie haulocaust.

Don't worry—there will be more zombies in the book movie ahead then there probably has ever been. People should be pleased.

1. Have these guys ever debated why this is happening? That's what's so good about Dawn of the Dead.

There will certainly be more talk of "why" coming up. I'm not saying they'll find the answers—but there's going to be questions asked. It still hasn't even been a year yet in the book—and they've been spending the time up to this point just dealing with the crisis—trying to stay alive. Once they're over the initial shock—they'll be looking for answers... at least more than they have been.

2. Is Alice gonna tie up any more zombies after what happened to carol?

Probably not... obviously (after reading this issue).

You did say you're not gonna reveal the cause and I like it that way. Marvel Zombies rules. I think it's a huge turning point in Marvel's history.

Hopefully a POSITIVE turning point in history. We'll see.

Having Captain America's rotting brain put in to the corpse of a black man was sweet. And the covers smoke! You and Bendis are the Kirby and Lee of my generation! Brubaker's no slouch either. I started reading Daredevil and Captain America recently.

We're Lee and Kirby but neither of us draw (well)? That doesn't make sense. Can't Bendis and Bagley be Lee and Kirby? I'll be Alan Moore, if you don't mind. Brubaker can be Claremont.

3. Are the t-shirts delayed I still haven't gotten my TWD tee?

I hope you've gotten it by now. If not, you need to make sure your retailer ordered it for you. I don't know what the delay could be.

Here's to the Governor getting wasted soon.

Scott Spencer

Your toast is my command. Governor got wasted in this very issue!

Mr. Kirkman,

I just spent a weekend catching up with some reading, and at one point it became 'zombie time'. While I still collect every TWD as it comes out, this was the first time I read all 7 trades in one sitting. It finally dawned on me at one point that there have been more deaths to this group since they've reached the 'sanctuary' of the prison, than prior to getting there.

Well, it is important to note that they were out of the prison from issues 1 to 12, and in the prison

from 13 to 48... so it's only logical there would be more deaths in that time. Deaths from zombie attacks? Not so much, I don't think...

I guess similar to all Romero themed stories, the real 'bad guys' of TWD are those who still have a pulse. In my opinion that's what truly makes a zombie story scary.

Well, adversaries who can think would always pose more of a threat.

Now getting back to my reading. Upon completion of TWD, I moved on to a story by Brian Keene called Dead Sea. It was a pretty good read, and I was floored to find out that he makes at least two references to The Walking Dead! I guess this means you've officially become 'pop culture'! Congratulations, and keep up the great storyline!

Aloha,
Gordon Fernandez

Yeah, I've been hearing a lot about Dead Sea by Brian Keene, I really would like to read it, so I'm sure I'll buy it eventually and read the first 80 pages and then never get back to it, despite how much I enjoy it, like I've done with every novel I've tried to read in the last two years.

I've still got to read World War Z.

Anyway, I'm super flattered that Brian Keene used the comics in his book. That's' very, VERY cool.

Mr. Kirkman,

Hello.

I just finished Walking Dead #45, and I continue to enjoy your storyline. I was surprised that Alice seems to now be able to perform trauma surgery. I am sure there is more to her character and expertise than what is explicitly revealed in the panels, but this seemed to be a bit of a stretch for me. I realize that Hershel has some surgical veterinary experience and probably lent a hand, but I had assumed that being gut shot meant Rick was getting written out.

Oh, ye of little faith! It's not overly explained in the series but Alice is pretty much a genius, who can just read books and do the things she reads about. She's almost completely self-taught and can do a whole range of different medical procedures now—or rather, she could. And Hershel helped her a bit on top of that.

I also had a request. How about a collection of the cover pages? The art is great and it does not seem to make it into the trade paperbacks.

Happy New Year,
Dave Miller

That will be published eventually... possibly very soon.

Robert,

I have been a comic book collector since 1977. I have seen comics come and go. I have collected through the good times and the bad. I recently, I was talking with a guy at the place where I get my comics (Jester's Playhouse in Northfield NJ) and we were discussing the current state of comics. Being an "old school" collector, I find that the big two (Marvel and DC) have lost all respect for the comic collector with the Death of Steve Rogers and ruining Spider-Man in more ways than I care to get into. And DC taking great stories like Identity Crisis and bleeding it 'til it screams "STOP!" I have lost a lot of the love that I had for the hobby. Marvel's Ultimate series is

something that I term "A Really Bad Idea Done Really Well!"

Then I was told about the "best comic on the market"... The Walking Dead. Sure, okay. After talking about it, and I do love zombies, I thought, "okay, I'll try the first trade." It was pretty good. Very interesting. Nice Character development. I'll give the second one a try. After reading that, I bought all seven trades en mass plus issues 43-45. I just finished #45. I couldn't put them down. I tried to finish the newest DUNE book before i got into it, but the WALKING DEAD was so riveting that I couldn't put it down. As much as I love zombies, I thought it was going to get old with issue after issue of zombies eating people. The post apocalyptic zombie infestation is more of a setting than what the actual book is about. It's just awesome. Sadly, I now have to wait for mere monthly installments.

I posted a review on my blog. Hopefully, it will attract more readers. In it, I mentioned that this would be the perfect show to put HBO back on the map.

Don't I know it...

The only negative that I can say about this book is that I forgot what it was like to be this exited about collecting comics. When the next issue comes out, I will be so happy that I'll probably read it in the car. Only POWERS comes close to this book.

Yeah, but how close does it actually come? Not very—right? RIGHT?!

The WALKING DEAD is my new favorite comic book. At 45 issues it has held up more than Y: The Last Man has, which was a great book, but lost steam after a while.

Keep up the good work. . . .and Thanks!

Kevin Dillon

No, thank you for the kind words, sir.

Dear Mr. Kirkman:
TWD has made its way into Spain and we at our drawing academy are totally delighted at it. I personally am completely hooked to it. Let's start with some comments: The series are taking place during 2004-05 right? So, where's the Internet gone? I feel quite down because in about 40 issues there have been no reference at all to telecommunication networks.

Yeah, I chose pretty early on to ignore that for at least the initial stuff. I figured most of those attempts would have been made when Rick was in a coma... and by the time he woke up, people had given up. I'm sure Axel spent a bit of time on the prison computer Googling that woman from the HITMAN movie—we all have.

I mean, even an amateur radio operator properly motivated by a biter (sounds weird in spanish: "mordedores") apocalypse could set up a working trick radio emitter or WiFi hotspot properly configured for broadcasting and there haven't been any.

Maybe all those guys capable of that got eaten—who knows.

When I saw the Christmas episode with the game console I thought that would be it, but it wasn't. And when the characters got to the city and then to the NG station I thought "This is going to be it: they will find a PC or internet console or whatever" But... you now. Many of my generation would be very delighted at the introduction of a new character the "hacker/computer geek" type who could manage to communicate with people from Atlanta or elsewhere. Maybe the little kid who got his present for Chrsitmas, maybe a new character. This would be a completely new unseen episode in any zombie-related stories I can name, and I think know quite a lot. I am

not talking about some Umbrella supercorporation, for god's sake, no. Just a simple, normal, common day use internet user.

I imagine it would be pretty boring for the characters to sit in a chat room online for even five pages of an issue. It's just not practically for a comic, in my opinion.

And by the way: what has been done to the GSM network? Any walking dead in AT&T or Telefonica uniform wandering around? hehe... that'd be cool. I am not going to start bullshitting you about racial issues but IMHO the hispanic died too quickly; he was a good, character with a developed background. I can't believe Rick did not take him back to the infirmary after running over him while driving the van.

Sorry about that. I did regret that Martinez had to go like he did. That was the characters arc—and it was unfortunate that he happened to be the only Hispanic in the book. There will be more... eventually.

There is another character who may play a main role: the woman who complains at the Governor's massacre. She could well become the next governor of a matriarcate or something like that. Congratulations for this amazing piece of art. Keep it coming!

Alfonso

Thanks for writing, I'll do my best to keep things entertaining.

Hey,
I could go on and on about how great your writing is or how fantastic the books you write are and even tell you that I read practically everything you write. But I won't.

Cya,
Adam Davis

Well then I'm not going to print your letter. So we're even.

Dear Mr. Kirk-Man

I was just wondering if Carl is named after Carl Winslow?

Dimitri Vastardis

No, although I do share a love for Family Matters with my good friend Cory Walker, although I would consider his love to be more of an unhealthy obsession, but that's just how I see things.

No, Carl is named after my father. I also thought it was a unique name for a child these days. I pushed for it for my own son but my wife hated it—so we went another way.

Okay... so there you go... issue 48 in the can. On to issue, which should be in stores shortly, a month or less—but y'know... no promises.

See you then!

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hi All!

The countdown begins to the last Weekly issue! Until then, enjoy these letters about poor Tyreese.

-Sina

Well, this issue is a bit of a change of pace from previous issues, I hope you've all enjoyed it.

Kind of crunched for time right now--so let's just jump feet first into the ol' mailbag.

Yo Kirkman,

I got into TWD about six months ago and initially thought "what the hell, it's black and white. This isn't the 20's" but after picking up issues #7-41 (#1-6 are impossible to find thusly insanely expensive), I couldn't imagine it in color. It would take away from its gritty realism. Now it's my favorite book on the shelf. I've even gotten my friend into TWD who previously scoffed anything comics.

Anyway, this is my first time writing to a letters column and I just wanted to let you know that I just finished reading issue #46 and it ... was ... AWESOME!

Not to sound like some sick bastard, Governor wannabe, but Tyreese getting his head hacked off was too cool. It was definitely worth the wait. I like Tyreese and everything but when I saw the cover I thought "he's not gonna kill him," then you did, it was real and that's what I love about the series. No one is spared. Though if anything happens to Lori, Carl or Judy as the cover of issue #47 depicts, I'm gonna be seriously pissed (I'll still read since it would drive Rick over the edge and shit would hit the TWD fan and that would be awesome) but I'll totally be mad at you.

Heh--skip issue 48!

So you, Rad-Ad and Spiff-Cliff keep up the good work and my stupid roommate and I'll keep reading the best book out there.

Oh yeah, and kill that Governor asshole.

Later,
Dave Hodge

Governor dead? Check!

Mr. Kirkman,

This is actually the first letter I've written to TWD.. or any comic for that matter, but the events of #46 forced my hand. I mean, I know this arc is called 'no one is safe' but that doesn't lessen the blow. Tyreese will be missed. He's been one of my favorite characters since he was introduced.

As brutal as it was, the thing that struck me the most was how honest the cover art was. We've all been guessing on the forums and such, but I don't think any of us really thought Tyreese would die in the issue with the cover where it looked like he was going to die. What a mindf*ck! Trick us with the truth. I love it. It just makes me nervous about #47.. poor Lori and Judy. The fence looks like it's seen better days too.

Alan

PS. Please don't kill Axel! If you must.. I hope he goes out with a bang, Uncommon Valor style. Gene Hackman kicks ass.

Yeah, the biggest casualty in the series so far--the fence! I wanted Axel's death to be pretty abrupt and final... like things would be in real life. No speech, no moment of heroism or sacrifice... just a sound and a fallen body. Probably didn't live up to what you wanted... but most deaths wouldn't in real life. Not many people really get to go out in a grand style.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you for such an incredible series. I love that TWD explores the ways in which different people react to living in a world that's drastically different from what they're used to. I've gotten so attached to the characters, and in issue 46 I realized something about Rick that I hadn't fully appreciated before--his iron will. Here he is, with a missing hand, using crutches, and yet still fully focused on survival. As the Governor hacks off Tyreese's head, the others turn their heads away or try to cover their eyes, but Rick stays facing forward and stands perfectly still. I love that his eyes are covered in shadows in that

panel-- we don't know if he's closing his eyes or if he's watching the Governor, and the shadows make him looked emotionally deadened, just for that moment. My guess is that Rick's watching the Governor-- as awful as it is, someone needs to be watching the Governor, to see what he does next.

I'm so glad that Michonne is still alive and fighting! Please, please don't kill her off for a long time! I'd really like to learn more about her past. She just fascinates me. I disagree with the fans who think that your pacing is too slow. I love all of the background information and all of the attention that you give to developing the characters.

Thanks, in return, Michonne is alive... for now.

When I saw the preview for the next issue, I yelled! Not Lori and the baby! I often gasp or exclaim out loud while I'm reading TWD, I'm just so into the story! When my husband hears me, he knows there's no fire-- I'm just devouring the latest issue of TWD. :)

Thanks for a great series-- I'll be reading it and re-reading it for years to come.

Jeanne-Marie

Thanks a lot. Maybe I'm just now noticing, or maybe things really are picking up--but the female readership seems to be growing... and that makes me happy. Ladies seem to be a bit more discerning to me when it comes to entertainment... so I take it as a huge compliment. Thanks for writing Jeanne-Marie.

So Tyreese bites it, and not even by a zombie. That's kinda' shitty. Actually, this is really upsetting. I know "no one is safe", blah, blah, blah, people die in zombie books, but to get it from a crazy cock-sucker, like the Governor (who really should be dead) is just fucked. I just hope Michonne goes all Pam Grier on his mutherfuckin' ass. Don't puss-out on this one Kirkman!

Oh, yeah, love the book. Keep writtin'.

Dave

Well, The Governor is dead now... but again, I thought it was a bit too unrealistic to have Rick or Michonne do the deed... a little too clean story-wise. I suppose I should wait until letters come in for issue 48 to reply to all this stuff...

This is a first for me. Never written to one of you funny book guys before, but you finally made me do it, you killed off Tyrese, fuck me rigid didn't think you'd do it. He'd become one of my favorite characters in the series and you offed him. After the zombie necking I guess I should of realized you weren't pulling any punches but damn. I got into your book after telling a friend who was just getting into comics about Bendis, he returned the favor by telling about some fella named Kirkman, I grabbed the first trade and was hooked, immediately getting the rest of the trades and looking into this Invincible thing and some li'l book called Battle Pope.

Congratulations sir you've created some of the best mythology anyone's come up with in years. I was even able to get my girlfriend into Dead, the first comics she's ever been interested in.

You're a worthy heir to Romero in the canons of zombie storytelling, thank you and keep up the amazing work.

-Ivan

p.s. Ignore all the whiny bastards complaints about pacing, after years of dealing with the big boys dragging shit out until the next big crossover and then letting us down with a minor character death or surprise resurrection, your willingness to kill of characters we truly feel invested in is a heart wrenching welcome, keep making me mourn.

Damn it, I wish I could go one letters column without Bendis getting mentioned. I know he spends hours scanning these things to see if his name is mentioned... it's almost the only thing he lives for these days. It's so sad. I mean, I guess if it makes the guy happy... but whatever.

As far as the pacing comments go. I do read the criticism and take it to heart but I just do what I want for the most part. It's hard to take the criticism seriously when sales are still going up.

KIRKMAN!

You sick fucker!, I didn't care much for the Governor when he was mutilated, but Tyresse? fuck me!. I had already found out about his decapitation from the kirkmania fan boards (yeah thanks for the spoiler warning "ChaosTheory" pfft) But to do it in several attempted swings and with mid-death gurgling! ewww fucking crazy! Am i right to say that he finally severed it with a kick? You're a sick sick man.

Sorry about the spoilers... I'm trying to get a handle on that place. And yes--the kick is what finally did it.

This is my second letter in a matter of days, but I couldn't help myself. Poor Tyreese! and after he did so well to survive being locked in the prison gym alone. Mind you what a fucking idiot to leave in the first place! It's a guess but I think Michonne is the one holding the gun to Lori's head (47), after they let her man die (she's fucking nuts after all). Are you preparing yourself for the mindless idiots that address racism with everything the book puts out? What's the world coming too, hey?

It hasn't happened so far... but hey--everyone is entitled to their opinion. It's not that much of a problem.

I saw Cloverfield (WATCH THIS MOVIE!) last night and someone actually complained on a website about the looting scene because the thieves were all portrayed as "black guys" tsk tsk.

I don't recall the specifics of that scene, but if EVERYONE in that place in the movie was black... they'd have a solid reason for an argument. Just like if I'd ONLY killed Black people in my book... things would be a bit more suspect.

Just keep this up man, i won't praise you because your ego might take over and you might do something stupid, like continue to write Marvel Zombies--they milked it enough already!!

Adam

That's right--THEY did. I've only done 11 issues of that series.

P.S Lori is a fittie ♥ you follow me?

If I knew what a "fittie" it I would. Isn't he a rapper?

O Kirkman! my Kirkman!

Dude, thank you so much for satisfying my craving for a realistic (or at least pseudo-realistic... if you will...) zombie story. I was getting tired of the same old stagnant, ever re-hatched zombie stories that I've been coming across in my day. I know some people dream about what it would be like to live in a zombie-infested, psycho-killer ridden society, and your comic allows us to get a taste of that from the comfort of our homes, here in reality.

What's real estate go for there?

The Walking Dead is one of the few comic series which I look forward to on a regular basis and make a point to pick up (I live in a small town in Canada... I don't have ANY place to buy comics. It's bothersome, man.. REAL bothersome. I take a 2-hour train ride to Toronto on a monthly basis in order to pick up your little two-dollar-and-ninety-nine-cent-wonder. I mean, I'll be honest, I do other stuff while I'm there, but The Walking Dead is one of the most enticing aspects of my journey!). Most of the "mainstream" (i don't really like that word, but hey, bear with me) comic stuff that I check out just doesn't do it for me.

Then stop reading it! Only buy books you like and comics as a whole will get better! The "mainstream" which, honestly, is pretty great right now for the most part--will only get better if people stop buying books out of habit. Nobody saw Batman and Robin out of habit... and what happened? Batman Begins. Think about it.

I tend to live in the past, reveling in the glory days of comic series long-since dead...(in most cases gone long before I was even born.. I'm seventeen...) but your Walking Dead evokes a kind of spirit that is missed in what is a more modern, commercial comic business.

As a side note... I REALLY appreciate the fact that there are no god-damn advertisements slapped in the middle of every other page in your books. I get enough images of Spongebob promoting his latest DVD and the Hulk telling me how great some new car is whenever I pick up a Marvel comic, thank you very much!

I'm also glad to see that the bombardment of letters labelling you as some sick racist fuck have subsided (either that or you have simply stopped publishing them..). That really pissed me off. The lengths some people will go to in order to justify claims that have absolutely no basis.. it's sickening!

They stopped, thankfully. There really never were all THAT many, though.

Anyways, you're probably getting tired of reading my ramblings, but hey, I've never written to a writer I admire before, and I sure as hell love to write (which brings me to another point.. haha.. writing is what I do, and I have often hypothesized about what a professional life as a writer would be like.. I tell ya, it's titillating! I consider myself to be somewhat of a writer, and seeing someone like you being able to compose something like the Walking Dead gives me faith!)

I guess it's about time to wrap this up..

oh wait.
no it isn't.

one final point.

the beheading of Tyreese... HOLY SHIT, MAN.
probably THE most intense collection of panels I've ever been within.. (physiologically, of course)
It was absolutely crazy, man. I loved it and hated it. I loved to hate it, and I hated to love it.

You're good at what you do, man. Keep it up, I'm lovin' it, and I'm sure a hell

of a lot of other people are too.

Christian Julien Siroyt

Thanks, man. As I type this it's 4pm on a Monday and I'm sitting at my desk in my pajamas... I haven't showered, I'm not wearing shoes... my basement is nice and cool... it's the best job in the world, sir... I totally recommend it. And at 17, if you're smart about it--you could totally pull it off.

IF MICHONE DON T SHOOT THE GOV. IN THE HEAD... I LL STILL BUY UR BOOK NO MATTER WHAT!

I know they will all DIE. It s the only thing we know in life. So keep making me scream shit like "JUST FUCKING SHOOT HIM BITCH!".

With love/hate
=PP=

Hah hah.

Mr. Kirkman,

When they killed Gwen Stacy in Amazing Spiderman #121, I was there.
When they killed Barry Allen (The Flash) in Crisis on Infinite Earths #8, I was there.
When they killed Jason Todd in " Batman A Death in the Family" I was there.
When they killed Superman, I was there.
When they killed Kid Miracleman in Miracleman #15, I was there.
When they killed Captain America in #25, I was there.
When they killed The Elongated Man in 52 #42, I was there.
When they killed Rorschach in " Watchmen #12, I was there.
When you killed Bishop in U X-men # 90, I was there.
When you killed Angstrom Levy in Invincible #33, I was there.
ect. ect. ect.

The death of Tyreese was more emotional than all of them put together. You have such a great writing style that makes you care for the cast of TWD like they were real people. Great Job.

Tyresse
R.I.P.
Walking Dead #7-#46

Erik Porter

Thank you, sir.

Kirkman, I haven't picked up a comic since the early 70s. One day a few years back I was shopping with my nephew for some Oogio cards, if that's how it's spelled, and I stumbled upon The Walking Dead and I've been hooked ever since. I love zombies.

Heh... Oogio.

Now I never thought I'd be one of those geeky fan boys standing up and talking technical issues at a SciFi con or similar forum, but here we are.

A few issues back, 44 or so, the Governor was talking about how it took his men "months" to learn to drive the "tank". First, it appears to be a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Close enough, it is an armored vehicle, tankish to a puke civilian. It doesn't take months to learn to drive a tank or other armored vehicle. I learned how to drive a M60A3 main battle tank at Fort Knox while in the Army Reserve in the early 80s in about 30 seconds. Turn on the fuel pumps, hit the ignition, and it steers with a wheel or stick and has brake and throttle pedals. It's not like you have to practice parallel parking. You're proficient in minutes. Firing that main gun would take longer, like 10-15 minutes. Seriously, if you're familiar with assault/automatic weapons, you can shoot just about anything. Bradleys usually sport a M242 Bushmaster chain gun. Simple to load and fire.

However, if you're tooling around in an armored vehicle for months you will have serious maintenance issues. Heavy equipment requires heavy maintenance. They throw tracks, consume huge amounts of fuel and oil, need all kinds of filters, or they just quit. They're rated at hours between breakdowns. A lot of key parts wouldn't be stored at a National Guard/Reserve armory. Fill out a form, wait a few weeks. It's the military way. Just a little military vehicle FYI.

Oh, you think you know more about this stuff than I do... really... mister "Oogio?" Trust me... my research into these matters is meticulous.

A few other things have been bugging me too. Why hasn't Rick or anyone looked for a phone book, the yellow pages, to see what kind of local resources that were available, and may still be available? I'm surprised that no one has needed a pharmacy or auto parts or other common shit that we take for granted in our day to day lives. If they're staking out their claim at the prison, it would make sense rather than driving around and looking. I'd bet there are phone books in that prison. The local Southern States or other farmers co-op would be a good place to know about. Go get a load of lime and spread around your perimeter and that will slow down rotting flesh. It'll speed up the decomposition, post-haste.

Another thing, as a southerner all my life (I live in Louisville, right up the road from you), I can't imagine rotting bags of flesh lasting long in the heat. Putrification, along with the flies, and the hornets/yellow jackets, turkey buzzards, etc. would consume them rather quickly. Take a trip down I-75 to the greatest school in history, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and I bet you could get a tour of the body farm. It'll be an eye opener.

With them up and walking around and stuff--I assume I'm given a little bit of leeway on the realism. If all the zombies just rotted realistically and went away... this book wouldn't be nearly as fun. I'm just assuming whatever is making them walk around is also preserving them a little.

Any who, I love the book and look forward to each issue. I was deeply saddened to see Tyresse go this last issue. He will be missed.

Unless you're a hungry zombie, that is.

Bill Locke

Hey, thanks for writing Bill. I really appreciate the oversight. I do try my best to keep things on the up and up... but at times, things just need to be inaccurate for story purposes. Pay attention to Rick's gunshot wound... that's probably the most unrealistic thing in the book so far. At the end of the day, it's still a work of fiction--it's not more unrealistic than your average movie or television show.

Dear Cap,

Whoa, mucho shocking. That guy Tyreese musta had a thick neck, eh? I've seen Erik Larsen's cover to TWD 50...unless my eyes deceive me! I see super-heroes. One of `em looks like Rick Grimes. I doubt that you would do that with this series, though, so I don't know whether to be encouraged or not; super-heroes are the bomb, of course. It should be a good time for this book soon, cause by my math there should be about 4 issues in the next few months! Hey how about a "Spider-Man: Team-up" series!! I see no reason to keep calling them Marvel Team-Up...all it means is Spidey WON'T be in every issue, like he used to be(but I don't expect you to understand, you started reading in '90)!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yeah, I can say right now that there will NEVER be superheroes in this comic. So don't let that ultra-rare variant for issue 50 fool you. It's just a fun thing we're doing for the big anniversary. It doesn't reflect the insides at all--you'll notice Tyreese and The Governor are on that cover.

Hi, hello, and Greetings from your neighbor from the north(Ohio). My name is Heath and I have been a fan of your work for the 2 short years I have been into comics. My friends, Jamie and Theresa of Packrat comics in Hilliard, Ohio recommended Walking Dead to me. Walking Dead was one of the stories that kept me going with comics(I have a problem with sticking with a hobby for more than 6 months). I'd never thought a horror comic could keep my attention, because I thought they were too hokey like the movie "Dawn of the Dead". I also enjoy Crawlspace: XXXombies pencilled by previous Walking Dead artist Tony Moore.

You mean Kieron Dwyer right? Tony only co-plotted that book... or something.

I was wondering, is there ever a thought of ending this story? I wouldn't want that to happen in the near future, but if there is, how would you end it?

Not something I'd answer in a letters column. I don't plan on ending this series any time soon.

Another thing, I think Walking Dead would be a better cable Mini-series rather than a movie, because if it were a movie, the stories details that make it would be hacked and slashed, like an Alan Moore film, and it would suck balls hard.

Thanks for the Walking Dead,
Heath Grimm

A cable mini-series would be pretty good. I love me some John Adams on HBO. HBO, are you there? Mini-series please.

Mr Kirkman,

I have just finished reading the walking dead 46 and at the same time I am watching the legion of superheroes. What do they both have in common? No african americans in the future. Well okay one or two. It seems like the white man has systematically figured out a way to eliminate us out of comics as well as television. Well your walking dead book which is based out of the city that I'm living in (Atlanta) is down to one character of color. Funny considering when I walk out the door I only see people of color. I'm wondering where all these tough white folks come from. I mean if you look at T.V. and comics African Americans are all dead, homosexual, drug addicts or prostitutes. Funny to me whatever sport we play whether it be golf or football we are leaders and if Mr. Kirkman you haven't noticed we may be putting a person of color in office. What does that mean? It means you shmuck, that we are not stupid either. I know you have a predominantly white audience but give me a break do you really believe that whites are as tough as you make them out to be? In the same passage do you really believe that African Americans are as weak as you and the media makes us out to be? It literally takes a group of racist to down one person of color. I still love the book with its closet racism but believe me when I say that we see what you and the media is doing. As always we shall overcome.

Rich

Michonne is the strongest character in the book. I killed one black person and a billion white people recently. As for Atlanta, the book takes place a great many miles from the city... and I'm willing to bet the rural areas around Atlanta are not predominantly black areas. Also, most of the people were herded into Atlanta for safety and died. Our characters are all from surrounding areas, not Atlanta. I also don't recall ever portraying black people to be stupid--but whatever, you've got a point to make, I suppose.

Tyreese's death is a testament to how important he was to the series... a great character gets a great, eventful death.

I'm not going to defend myself any more. There will be more people of color in this series... and they will eventually die... just like all the white people in the series. And the argument will continue.

Hello,

I just recently got into your book, and I've got to say it's one of the most compelling I've read, but I'm sure you're sick of hearing that. I'm always imagining how a zombie outbreak would go down here in Tokyo. Anyway, I was just wondering why wasn't Otis buried along with Carol and Allen? I noticed at the funeral for Carol there were only two burial plots. Although he was just a minor character, he seemed to have spent enough time with group to warrant a proper burial rather than being burned with the rest of the biters. He wasn't that much of a prick, was he?

Hell, they used to let him watch the kids.

Anyway, keep up the good work, sucks about Tyreese, can't wait to see what happens next.

Joey Jamir

Otis wasn't buried because he didn't have much left of him and didn't die at a time when the burying would have been easy to do. There were tons of zombies to clean up... and Otis was a zombie... Allen and Carol weren't zombies.

Dear Mr. Kirkman.

Having Just read issue 46 of The Walking Dead, I have to say, wow! Just when i think things are calming down for the characters of this book, something like this happens and i am blown away. I had to re-read the sequence detailing the execution of Tyreese four or five times. I could not believe what i was seeing and am still in a state of shock and disbelief.

Never, has a work of fiction caught me so off guard. Never.

Well done, The Walking Dead will always have a place in my heart, albeit a very dark, sinister place.

Sincerely,
Alan Marsh.

P.S. I hope Michonne guts the Governor and feeds him his remaining eye.

Sorry to disappoint you on the governor thing.

Hello,

I don't care if this gets printed or not. I would just like to say that I feel you handled Tyreese's death with class. I loved that character and I was pained to see him go as he was my favorite character besides Rick. Ironically my first letter to be printed in a book was in #46 with Tyreese bein' dead and all. So yes you made me both sad and happy in the same issue. That's why I love this book. Despite what anybody says it's flawless. Keep up the outstanding work sir.

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

Yay--happiness and sadness... my bread and butter.

Kirkman,

First off, I would like to tell what an absolute great series you are writing. I was never a fan of the whole zombie genre until I read Walking Dead. I wrote them off as rehashes of great storytellers of old. Only after the insistence of a friend did I pick up Walking Dead and find this treasure trove of zombie greatness. After reading issue 46(as always great) I read your letter about taking hits on the lack of minorities in your book. A few issues ago a friend of mine wrote you about this matter. While I agree that minorities are sadly under-represented in comics as they are in any form of entertainment and literature; it is not your torch to bear. First off take a look around the comic world and how many minority superheroes can you count? This leads me to the point that Walking Dead is not a superhero book. The Walking Dead to me is the representation of what would happen in real life in the context of an apocalyptic event. People need to realize that your book only deals with a small group of people who have found each other. You are not showing an entire country filled with thousands of survivors speckled with one or two minority characters. Not to mention the fact that Michonne is the fucking RAMBO of the title! A black female is the one character who is handing out beatings like cheeseburgers at McDonalds. I hope Walking Dead continues for years to come.

P.S. Please let Michonne go straight ninja on The Governor.

Thanks Again,
Tim Saylor

Face it, folks... I love black people!

Greetings Robert,

It's writers such as yourself that give hope to writers such as myself. I left comic books 'for good' during the speculative era a decade and a half ago because, for the most part, what was on the shelves sucked. Flash covers and bloated cross-overs had bled all creativity from the entertainment medium I most loved, so I just stopped reading. Most did eventually and the rest is history.

You, sir, I think are 80% responsible for bringing me back into the fold. While I kept on reading my old stuff from the Silver age to around 1992, I had not read anything "new" since around 1993 or 94. A friend slipped me some of Brubaker's Cap re-launch and I loved it. Then I walked into a comic shop called Nostalgia Newsstand during a brief stay in North Carolina and asked the guy behind the desk to recommend me the absolute best written series out today. "That's WALKING DEAD, sir." I bought trade #1 and after reading it drove back the next day and bought every trade available at the time. That evening I started reading and did not stop until I had finished. Soon after I snagged issue #0 of INVINCIBLE and said, OK, I am already hooked and bought your stupendously huge and expensive Hardcover of the first 24 issues. I read it in one sitting (God, my ass hurt from that). Yeah, I wished I had not read #0

because I knew the big twist, but it still rocked something fierce.

Since then I have not looked back. While my starving writer budget will not allow for a huge reading list, there is no doubt WD and INVINCIBLE are my two favorites. Your writing, pacing, building of suspense and richness of characters is a thing of beauty. It's given me the kick in the ass I needed to pursue a lifelong dream and create my own comic book(s). After months of hard work I am now talking to two different publishers about two of my would be projects and it is very exciting. Even if it doesn't happen this time, it will eventually because I have found my groove. So thanks for that.

Congratulations, sir!

Now let me ask you some silly questions and make a few WD related comments.

1. I sold my trades for WD in bulk figuring I'd buy the hardcovers. Grabbed the signed V2 and V3 on sale the other day, though they were sold out of #1. The price jump from V2 to V3 was 100%! What the heck was up with that? \$30 to \$60? Did paper go up that much? Please tell me V4 is not \$120! Yowzer! Forgive me if this has been addressed before. If so, just ignore me.

The signed edition of the V2 HC was also \$60 but the price was not printed on the actual book, it was a sticker. The \$30 price was printed on the book under the sticker... it's a long story. The smaller hardcovers will always have a \$30 regular edition and \$60 signed edition.

2. There is no need to go into the origins of why the world went all zombie. That's not the central story. Ignore those who ask.

Great question!

3. People keep talking about a movie or television adaptation. A movie won't do it. Your story is far too complex for a 2 hour cliff-notes version. It would not do your work justice. Frankly, the only route I see is an HBO or Showtime series, which would allow for no pulled punches. Both networks are damned near putting porn onto their broadcast signal. The violence allowed is way beyond an MPAA sanctioned R. Ever see ROME? Good Lord. You'd be able to tell your story in all of its glory because no way could you do it on free broadcast Network television! Fact is, done right the show could run for years. But I know how difficult it is to get such deals and the politics involved. Good luck.

We have come close... but obviously haven't quite gotten there yet.

4. I think it's time you had a guest appearance from Spawn or perhaps Cerebus. Just kidding. :-)

Hah.

5. The continued killing off major characters is welcome. Have you ever considered that maybe one or two characters are so popular with readers that killing them would result in a huge drop-off of readers? That kind of thing can happen. If you killed off our fearless one-handed leader, well, good luck with that because it would be brutal. Fans at conventions would come after you with their pitch forks and torches.

Kindest regards,
Matt S.

We'll see... er.

Mr. Kirkman,

First off, let me just say, I AM a fan. Have been for a while. I've got the hardcover Invincible collections, I've liked some of your work at the big M, and I really enjoyed Walking Dead for the first couple dozen issues or so. That said, I have to inform you I'm dropping the title.

Wait a minute... you stopped liking the book after issue 24 and it took you until 46 to drop the title?!

While the death of Tyreese is part of it, let me reassure you that I'm not another ranting, raving "U R a racism!!" goon here to flip out about the minority. If his death had any special impact, it was that he was one of the few characters I still cared about in the story; his color had nothing to do with it (I'm white, anyway, and we're not allowed to call racism). What really killed the whole thing for me was your return to the cliché "the humans are worse than the monsters" hackery that I'd hoped we'd left behind with the end of the first Governor arc. The Governor character (more like caricature) was trite and lacked any redeeming qualities, but he served his purpose as a temporary distraction from the zombies (as wont as I am to admit it, they can get a little boring as antagonists). I was left with a bad taste in my mouth after that storyline for all the wrong reasons... I, like many, was rooting for Michonne to kill him after we'd put up with her repeated rape and torture long enough that it no longer had any impact, and we were left just itching for them to get out of the town and move on. You seemed to try too damned hard to make us hate him, with his feeding the helicopter crash victims to zombies, cutting off Rick's hand, then feeding the hand to his "daughter" (which we've now sunk from implied "zombie incest" to blatant, overt zombie incest as last issue featured him pulling out her teeth so he could open mouth kiss her until he vomited), and I just didn't give a damn anymore when it turned out he survived. Michonne didn't just stab him when she had to leave? Whatever.

We then get to this issue, which starts with a convoluted and insipid dead giveaway that Michonne didn't really die at the end of last issues pointless two man attack on the retreating bad guys, apexes with a drawn out beheading over some 14 panels as our heroes stand there and watch like they care less than we do at this point, and then the Governor drives off and flips out, only to have Michonne teleport (BAMF!!) next to him with an Uzi while there's two dozen people watching, and just stands there instead of shooting him. I know, that wouldn't have given us another (yawn) cliffhanger ending, but it DID deliver another helping of "I don't really care anymore."

How long she stood there--and her teleporting in is kind of left to the reader to interpret. It's a comic. You can read it like she's standing there for a month, or she could be stepping out and putting the gun to his head right away. It's all up to you.

I hope she shoots him, but they find him two issues later (when they realize she's shot him and walked off), and it turns out he just lost the other eye, and we get a few more issues of him doing something else meaningless and grotesque (maybe he'll come back and have sex with Tyreese's corpse, while Rick explains, deadpanned, that this may give Michonne time to escape). Because, really... That will drive home the point that you've given up on the book like the rest of us.

I guess things COULD be worse... Julie could have been a zombie baby.

Still reading Invincible,
Steve

Well, thanks for reading Invincible. I'm sure I don't need to say this to most of you, but I haven't "given up on the book" not by a long shot. There's a lot of very cool stuff on the horizon. The book has been darker than usual as of late (which probably didn't seem possible) but it's all about cycles, things will return back to "normal" eventually.

Mr. Kirkman,

Wow. That was one of the few times i have actually swore out loud whilst reading a comic. Tyreese's death was so unexpected that even after I'd seen the Governor kick his severed head out of the truck I was still wondering how you were going to explain his miraculous survival. Although he was one of the strongest characters i can totally understand why he was killed; now nobody seems safe and the Governor seems like even more of an irredeemable evil dickhead. I really, really want him to die, which obviously means you know how to write a good villain.

Yay!

The only problem i had with Tyreese's death was the fact that the other survivors let it happen so easily. I know the Governor told them that he had Michonne and that if anything happened to him she'd be killed, but it still seemed kind of out of character especially for Rick. Most of the survivors have known Tyreese a lot longer than Michonne and it seems to me that they like him a lot more as well. It seemed they had the perfect opportunity to put a bullet in his brain and then they could worry about trying to save Michonne.

Consider the geography. Shooting The Governor, who was armored, without hitting Tyreese and killing him yourself would have been tricky. Also, the Governor was all talk up until the moment he slammed that sword down on Tyreese for the first time. And after that, he was pretty much dead... and everyone was in shock. There's a few reasons why they reacted the way they did. The situation was far from ideal--but that's how life is.

On another note, Axel is fast becoming my favourite character. I really like the way the other characters treat him like an inconvenience that they have to put up with and the way none of them seem to trust him. I felt really sorry for him when he was basically ignored after he was shot. I'm hoping that at some point in the future he'll have a great heroic moment where he gets to prove himself. Either that or he'll betray them all and side with the governor.

Keep up the good work,

Sincerely,
Adam Pidgeon.

I do miss Axel a great deal--for what it's worth.

Hey Kirkman,

I'm long time fan of the walking dead and I'm really sad to see Tyreese go. His passing was well in line with the other characters in the series and I love how you do not give preferential or detrimental treatment to minority characters. That said, we are down to two prominent minority characters, and by the time this letter is printed there may be none left. If I'm not mistaken, the prison is somewhere near Atlanta, Georgia. The population of the state is 39% minority, and that is not reflected in your story. I think that if roughly 2/5ths of a region is affected by a zombie apocalypse are minorities, roughly 2/5ths of the survivors would be minority. I love your series, and will continue to be a fan, but give me a fucking break, we need more color in the story.

-Luis

You'll have it, sir! Scout's honor.

I doubt that you will print this, I love your comic, but I can't help but notice that the worst things to happen to your characters always seem to happen to the black people, despite that there's not many in the comic in the first place. Atlanta is 67% black (fyi). The only gay activity took place between two black males, and all the violence done to blacks are very detailed, the only oral sex is by a black woman, just saying but it's your comic, you can do what you like.

Thanks,
Titus Ashley

I see where you're coming from. Although, I don't know why you find gay activity to be counted among the worst thing to happen to a character in the book. I've gone over why Michonne was raped before. Tyreese death was explored so thoroughly, and in detail, not because he was black and I was reveling in the murder--but because, in my opinion he was the second most important character in the book... and killing him was a big deal. His death, in a lot of ways, was more shocking than Lori's death... which is quicker.

You have a valid complaint, and I do recognize it... but you are reading into things a little bit. Just the same, I will do my best to make horrible things happen to a bunch of white people before something else so graphic hits a minority character.

Kirkman!

It's been about 2 weeks since WD#46 came out. The first time I read it, I swore out loud. I never do that. I was at work , so my 4 and 5yr old kids didn't hear me. My work is my comic shop I opened a year ago, Hometown Comics in Edwardsville, IL(plug-plug). When I unload the weekly shipment for inventory before making them ready for sale, the only comic I stop what I'm doing to read is Walking Dead. I was angry after I read WD#46. I was angry at the Governor. Then I was angry at you. Then I got angry at myself for getting angry at a dadburn comic.

Seems like you might have some anger issues.

No less than twice a month, I'm introducing WD to a new reader. 100% of those new readers are on board for the long haul. Thank you for creating a compelling read that gets me going. I did want to give a shout out to my old Collinsville, IL Walmart co-worker, Ron Ford(a big WD Fan).....who STILL hasn't come by my new store. GET IN HERE, YA BASTICH!

Douglas Dial

Yeah, come on, old co-worker, Ron Ford! Get down to Douglas' store, HOMETOWN COMICS in Edwardsville, Illinois... I hear it's a totally sweet place to buy comics!

Dear zombie guy (lol)
Sorry about that, I love marvel zombies and I also love your work blah blah blah. I'm going straight to the questions, but know I love you.

I guess there's been a lot of influences on TWD, like in Invincible. I was wondering what they are, for example in invincible there is a character who resembles that guy from watchmen, and have they had an impact on TWD. I don't mean to call you a copier but the question came up in my head when I read volume 5 and saw the drawing of Rick and Glenn spotting the helicopter like in the remake of dawn of the dead.

This could be a coincidence, but I'm just asking. Anyways I love your work and I forgive you for the past few issues, the've been a little late as I've heard. I can't wait to find out who "dies" next.

Your adoring fan,
Michael Olvera

I don't readily recall the scene from the Dawn remake that you're mentioning... but y'know, I have seen that movie at least twice, and I love it--it's a GREAT movie. But just because I had people seeing a helicopter... doesn't mean I was inspired by another instance of people seeing a helicopter and decided to steal the idea. To be honest... a helicopter passing overhead was a suggestion from a fellow writer whom I won't mention for fear of sounding to name-droppy. Originally I was going to get Rick and crew to Woodbury another way, but it wasn't very action packed. This fine fellow made the suggestion in passing and I moved forward with his blessing.

My point is, things happen any number of was... and coming up with stuff is what I do for a living... it's not all that hard... and it would take me more time to watch things and steal from it than it would for me to just make things up on the fly... so that's what I do.

I could have just as easily been stealing from Fantasy Island... or that one scene in that one movie where the characters look up at the sky--I mean, how could I possibly come up with the idea of two people looking up at the sky on my own?

Dear Kirkman,

Just wanted to let you know that issue #46 was outstanding. I know you have been getting a little flak from a few people lately in the letters column because they feel there hasn't been enough action in the book recently. I used to run a role-playing game called All Flesh Must Be Eaten (I'm sure you've heard of it) with some friends of mine for about two years once a week, a continuing story, and the best game session we ever had was one where there was absolutely no action. I hadn't planned the game for that week, I had no idea what direction I wanted it to go in, and I just let the guys' characters move the story. The story just kind of created itself for the night, and it really allowed them to flesh out their characters a lot more, and we got some real development done with them. We all learned a lot about each other, our roleplaying skills, and the characters' background stories that night.

Nerds.

Anyway, back to issue #46. I loved how, throughout most of the issue, there seemed to be a real sense of security and peace, even happiness. I really liked seeing the survivors feeling comfortable, even knowing what's going on outside the prison. One thing that I was a little upset about was the ending, the death of Tyreese. He was my favorite character, and he will be missed. I don't drink, but if I did I'd have a shot in his memory. However, even though I will miss him, I must say that you really wrote a spectacular death for him. I liked how, even though he knew it would probably be his last words, he still told the others not to listen to the governor. He was a hardcore tough guy till the very end. He knew that, even though he was about to die, he would not die in vain. Now that the other survivors have seen that sick bastard kill Tyreese, they will all probably be more stoic and determined to win this battle. Oh, and let's face it, chopping off someone's head with several swings of a machete? Grotesquely awesome. Just the kind of thing someone should expect from a comic book like The Walking Dead.

I take back the nerd thing.

In closing, thank you for the great story so far, and I'm looking forward to the final battle between the governor and his militia, and Rick and the survivors. I'll just have to find a new character to be my favorite. Glen's pretty cool, but nothing bad has happened to him in a while, so I suppose he'll be zombie meat soon.

Sincerely,
Dan Haskell

Glenn is pretty awesome... but y'know... he's not even in the book right now, he could already BE dead... and he is a minority character.

P.S. I've thought about this for quite a while, but never mentioned it until now. You ever notice how, on the cover of issue #28, with the way the light is glinting off that mask, it sort of looks like Boba Fett kicking a bunch of zombie ass?

Never noticed that--but maybe that's the reason I love that cover so much. I bought that original art right away... it's one of my favorites, and I love me some Boba Fett... hmmm.

Deadwalkers,

Yay for Axel and Patricia! Way to keep on with the good stuff of life -- in the bleak Walking Dead world, you've got to grab moments of happiness when you can. I also dug Axel's "This place is my home." With a few panels and lines of dialogue, you enriched his character beyond a catchphrase; good work. Same for Billy, it was nice to see a little more of him -- he's a character I feel has sometimes just been in the background.

Lot of good it did them... sigh.

Then Tyreese. Ah, shit. I think my reactions matched Patricia's during that whole sequence. This was the guy who survived in a locked roomful of zombies by himself! I'll miss his strength, his humor, and the camaraderie he provided. I hope our gang makes a run to retrieve his body for burial.

Then Michonne -- yay! I hope she doesn't just shoot the Governor, though I doubt she would. . . she should make him (or his right-hand man there) tell the other villagers what's really been going on. Then she could let a zombie bite him, bring him back to the prison and chain him up, and everyone could poke him with sticks and stuff. How cool would it be to see Michonne reenacting her arrival at the prison, walking up with a jawless zombie Governor on a chain? Plus the other Woodbury residents could move into the prison, there'd be lots of new folks to garden and mingle with, (plus more sex partners) and everyone could live happily ever after until the aliens come. . .

That would be an entertaining book...

One nit-picky thing -- sorry Charlie! -- but there's no way the Governor could see Michonne over his shoulder with no left eye. Oops! Let me make up for that by saying I've missed Charlie's art since "The X-Files", and his work here is leaps and bounds beyond that -- just beautiful and stark and frightening.

You've missed a lot of good stuff... too much to mention here, but White Death, CodeFlesh, Rock Bottom, Astronauts in Trouble, The Establishment and Savage are a good place to start.

About the pacing -- I love it. All those "talky" zombie-less issues let me feel like I can breathe. Thank god these characters occasionally get to rest! And just when I get lulled into a quieter state -- bam! Kirkman is back with a little of the old ultra-violence. And about the black and white -- love that too.

Thanks for the zombie poop thoughts. No, really. I'm one of those readers who loves thinking about the details. I know you've said you're not going to go into why they never run out of bullets and batteries and stuff, but that's one of the things I love considering with apocalyptic fiction. What happens in a society, already suffering, when no-one alive knows how to make more light bulbs? Or when the sewer systems back up and the plumbing stops working? Or if Hershel dies and no one else really knows how to farm? "Y: The Last Man" has looked at topics like that and made it good fiction; maybe ten years from now (when maybe two years have passed for the characters?) you can explore some of the topics of long-term survival. I could imagine our gang eventually kicking themselves for blowing up the gasoline supply at the military base. You should check out the book "The World Without Us" by Alan Weisman. It's not about zombies, but could provide some cool story thoughts; it's about what might happen to the planet and all of our man-made stuff, if we were no longer here. . .

Some other things I'd like to see: crows and wild dogs picking at corpses, and some skeletons here and there. I can't remember if this has been brought up before, but if the zombies are continually rotting, wouldn't there be some skeletons by now? And no zombies with hats or glasses. I mean, if I can't keep MINE from falling off. . .

Whatever artistic decisions you make, TWD will always be the top comic on my monthly pile.

--Dexter Midnight

You mentioned Charlie's name in your email... so he'll be sure to read this letter... and maybe he'll take some of your suggestions to heart. I think zombies with glasses look cool. More skeletons, though... I'll see what I can do.

Okay, another one down... next up, issue 50. WOO HOO!

See you then.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, here's issue 50, all over again.

It's crazy that we're making plans for issue 100 AS I TYPE THIS... guess that means sales stayed strong all these years.

Retroactive congrats to the guys,

Sina Grace

Okay, kids... that's issue 50. Issue 50. Fifty. Fif-ty. Half-way to issue one hundred.

Fifty damn issues.

Fifty.

I don't know, I'm a little awestruck to be honest. I'm not going to say I never thought we'd make it this far, because honestly, after the sales jump between issues 6 and 7 I kinda knew we'd be around for a good long while.

As for a little update on the strength of this book.... this is by far the highest selling issue of the series, which is way cool and means we're pretty strong. That said, we got an unrealistic bump in sales for this issue because of our first ever variant cover by Erik Larsen and Ryan Ottley. So this issue really shouldn't count. But I've already got sales figures for issues 51 and 52 and I'm glad to report that issue 51 sold better than 49 and issue 52 is our highest selling issue yet, not counting issue 50.

So yeah, sales are still going up, little by little, every month. Even now.

Which I don't say to brag, I really don't. A lot of you weren't around in the early days of this series. Early on I would report on how the book was doing as a way of reassuring readers that the book wasn't going to get cancelled at any point in the near future. I know what it's like trying new books. Even if you love something and it's a great book--things don't catch on sometimes. It gets old after a while trying new things only to have the cancelled just when they start to get good.

It's frustrating.

That's why I let people know, this book is doing well, sales are strong... better than ever.

And y'know, I don't think I'll ever be able to accurately convey just how thankful I am to each and every one of you for making this possible. I mean, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you guys. All of you. I wish I could fly to all your houses and give you hugs. This book is a huge deal for me. I'm so grateful that you guys and gals enjoy it.

And I'm enjoying it, too. I love working on this series. I plan on sticking with this book for years and years. And a huge part of that is the people I get to work with. Charlie Adlard, Cliff Rathburn and Rus Wooton make this book an absolute joy to work on.

Charlie, Cliff and Rus know how much I love them, so I'm not going to bore anyone with lengthy thank yous. Instead, I'm going to dive right into the mail. I don't think this is the longest letters column ever (although it might be) but it's certainly the longest I've done recently.

So here we go!

Dear Cap'n Kirkman,

I had no idea you had a beard! Or bond hair. That is you on the toilet in that ad, right? I must say that this issue was a bit more exciting than recently; if you don't get my mails regularly that's cause I don't get your issues on any kind of regular basis(it is Image Com:cs. ya know). I sense the big cliffhanger to mean someone's turning traitor? What else did I wanna say...? Oh yeah: This was much more readable than that best-selling ultra-hyped Dark Tower: The Long Road Home bunch of...stuff. Can't wait for the new status quo.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Yes, that is me. I have blonde hair and a beard--although I will say I'm probably a slight bit chubbier than I appear in that drawing... sadly.

Dear Kirkman,
N'ce. I just finished issue 47 and the letter column. I am on pins and needles (not necessarily in that order) to see who is holding the gun to

Lori? My money is on Michonne. I think that will be a good little twist. I mean, we all know she is crazy but we don't know what kind of crazy yet, do we? I think her motive would be Rick having let Tyreese die. The only flaw is how did she get back in the prison THAT fast without anybody knowing?

If it is Michonne, Thank God you waited til Back History month was over. (That's sarcasm)

Groan.

But back to 47. I wrote a while back and asked- thinking out loud- if the Governor would be irritated and/ or crazy enough to compromise the fences. He is I think it is very consistent wth him; he is a cut-off-your-nose-to-spite-your-face kinda guy. Or Michonne could cut it off for him.

I like books where people who you like (the "heroes") die. There will always be more people to like, right? I think we are at the point where- if not Rick- Rick's team dies. I think in a zombie/apocalyptic situation a lot of good people would die- unfairly or not is really just a judgment call

One last thing, a little business.

If your readership starts to dwindle then you should let us readers know. Then we can decide if it would be worth buying two copies and giving one away. That would have to reverse the cycle. First, I plunk down, what?, 6 bucks to get the comic I actually look forward to and your sales tick up. Then the person I give it to will, most likely, enjoy it and then a) start buying the series on a monthly basis; and then hopefully b) start buying the trades and further lining your pockets; which leads to c) we, who have been along for the ride from the beginning, get more Walking Dead.

Luckily, sales aren't dropping, and even if they did... our trade paperback sales are so high, we could sustain a pretty healthy drop without batting an eye. That said, there's no reason you can't

start buying two copies of each issue NOW. This book will never be selling TOO MUCH, so please, by all means, starting buying as many copies as you can in order to spread the word. I'd really appreciate it.

Just promise that you won't forget 'us'. Let's be honest, 'them' we could probably do without anyways, right?

Regards
Dawson

PS. I know that it is hard to believe but they actually rejected me from taking Alan Greenspan's position when he bailed. Now who's laughing?

Not me.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been reading comics for many years but up until I picked up The Walking Dead I was never impressed enough to actually write in about them. Congratulations sir you are my first letter (and will completely flip out and frame the issue if said letter is printed just because I'm a nerd like that haha)

Better go buy a frame!

Truth be told I was really getting bored with comic books and about to stop buying them all together. That all changed when I went into the comic shop and my eyes fell onto TWD volume 1. The whole cover with just the right amount of color along with the black and white drawing with awesome artwork caught my eye a most immediately (not to mention it had zombies!). My first words were "whoa, what is this?" The comic shop owner went "Awesome series man, you've got to try it out" Keep in mind I was about to call it quits on comic books so I was skeptical but decided to take the gamble, handed over the 10 bucks and went on my way. On my way home I decided to thumb through the book and I was hooked immediately. As soon as the train stopped I turned around and took another 30 minute ride back into downtown Chicago and bought all the other Walking Dead issues I could find.

The whole series is just a masterpiece in my eyes. The language and color reflect the world perfectly and you've shown that you're not afraid to put some lumps (or bite marks) on the main characters

You say "no one lives forever in this series" but you write it so well that we feel like we know the characters and understand them and then our jaw drops when one of them gets done in. I know that when Tyreese got killed I was totally shocked and then was like WHY ROBERT WHY??? WE JUST LOST TYREESE! when Axel went down. Those 2 were my favorites of the gang honestly. I just hope you spare Hershel at least for awhile longer, though I suspect with how things are going he's going to meet some untimely demise sooner rather than later. With that being said I think you can tell I think your book is AMAZING. It's rare to find a book with good art, a solid story, and the ability to get you to care about the characters but you pull it off flawlessly

Ok, whew. I've gotten that off my chest and have a few questions that you hopefully have time to answer

1) Are there any plans to have what's left of the gang meet up with some new people? I know a lot of readers are asking about Duane and Morgan but I'd be content with anyone since the current crew is getting knocked off pretty regularly.

There will always be new characters coming into the fold in this series from time to time... just go online and look at the cover for issue 53. There's more on the way very soon.

2) Are there any plans for some other random Walking Dead goodies? I found a shirt at the comic shop and seen the poster on the back of issue, was just wondering if there were any plans for other stuff such as action figures, etc. I'd happily put more of my money into your pocket for more stuff to put around my room.

If you go online to www.csmoorestudio.com you can see the loads of The Walking Dead busts and statues that sculptor extraordinaire Clayburn Moore is producing. They're totally awesome. There should be more things on the horizon as well.

That's about it. My apologies if this letter was too long or seemed to ramble (first time writer remember) but I thank you for taking the time to read it. Keep up the good work sir, and remember you have a reader for as long as the series lasts!

Respectfully yours,
Fred S.

We're on track for forever right now. Keep those fingers crossed.

I love the book. You are the professional writer here, but I have a scene idea that I've always thought would be good for a zombie movie or this comic. Sorry if you get these ALL the time.

Sigh.

Because society is shut down and everyone is hiding, there is no one to maintain the grass/weeds. The grass and weeds will grow tall.

This has been shown a few times in the book. We're on it.

Our survivors come to a park/play ground or a field full of tall grass. No zombies in site. They start to venture through the field. Someone makes a loud noise of some kind. 20-30 zombies that were lying in the field sit up at the same time. The survivors are now surrounded because they were careless. A sense of ease instantly turns into fright.

I'm sure we'll have a tall grass zombie at some point in this series.

Anyway, I thought I would throw it out there because I'll never make a movie or write a comic book, but I would like to see it.

Thanks for reading. I'll do the same on a monthly basis.

Mike Gineman

Really? That's it... no questions? No comments? I shouldn't even print this letter.

Uncle! A.I right! All right Kirkman. Let me up. Look at all this dirt. Man, you're ruthless. There are no working washing machines anymore remember? You made your point. It took Tyreese's death, but I'm finally convinced. Nobody is safe. Oh look, there goes Michonne! That woman is crazy. She is always muttering to herself, and disappearing to play Lone Ranger, I know you that evil smile of yours. She's going to join him soon. Isn't she? Hey! Talk to me. C'mon, you can't do that. Oh. Yes you can. But we don't know anything about her past. Now that I think about it, we don't know anything about anyone's past here beyond Rick and Lori. What's that? Not Andrea. You're not turning her into Zombie chow. I'll tell her and she's gonna shoot your ass and George Romero's ass too! What's that? Put up your dukes, pal. Those are fighting words and this time I'm going to kick your ass!

Victor Rosario
San Juan

Michonne is still alive out there somewhere--although, when we'll see her next is anyone's guess.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me just tell you what a fantastic ride this has been with The Walking Dead. I've collected comics for years and have never needed the kind of "fix" that I need each time I finish another issue of this amazing book. I love the realism of the characters, and the idea that no one is safe. This has a true sense of what an apocalyptic occurrence such as zombies inheriting the earth might be like. The true horror is not entirely the zombies, but in the true nature of people, and what they are capable of doing in the name of survival.

I've been around from the beginning issue of The Walking Dead and felt compelled to write this time (issue 47) because this is the first time I feel emotionally drained from reading comics. Dude, I am on the edge of my seat on every single panel of this issue, and last issue with Tyreese, WTF. LOL.

I also want to apologize to Mr. Charlie Adlard. When he took over for Tony Moore way back when I was not originally happy with that, but Charlie, you rock. Your art with Robert's writing makes this a very solid book, and I'm glad your on board.

I do have one question for you. Is there any plans for spin-offs away from the current storyline (like in another part of the world), I think I read somewhere that you had said there isn't, but just wanted to make sure.

Anyway, keep up the good work. I'm a fan for life

Sincerely,
Jason Thomason

Yeah, I'm pretty against spin-offs in general. For Invincible (my superhero book) that title has more characters than this one, believe it or now, and as a superhero title I think it's cool to have spin-offs, it works with the genre better. For this book, I kind of like the idea of people only needing to have issues 1 through 150 to have the whole story. There's no need to remember that a mini-series that's out there takes place between issues 45 and 46... it's all just one continuing story. I like it simple... I think it's better that way.

Kirkman,

Yes, another great issue with a nail-biting cliffhanger. It shocked me the Guv would ram the fence.

1. Wouldn't he want to take over the prison intact?

Yes, but he decided that he wasn't going to GET the prison without tearing down part of the fence and in that moment he supposed it could be fixed later. He was a bit crazy, don't know if you noticed.

2. You stated in your letter column: "I've considered the gay couple thing..."
a. Are you referring to yourself in a gay relationship?

I was referring to the book, I'm sure, I've considered putting a gay couple in the series. I was actually going to make Martinez gay, until I remembered that I was planning to have Rick beat him to death--then I thought, probably not the best thing to do with your first prominent gay character. There will be more gay characters eventually... not just Dexter and Andrew.

b. How would you explain your boyfriend to your child once they were old enough to damn you to hell?

You're joking right?

Axel got dead. Damn it! I was looking forward to some character development, you follow me? So far that makes two characters who've died after sex. You sick bastard.

It's just like Friday the 13th!

I'm glad Michonne didn't die. I just realized after typing this that you'll kill her now. Let me see, who will she have sex with before you kill her? Prediction: She'll have a threesome with Andrea and Dale and then take a dirt nap

Oh crap--now I've got to rewrite this.

I want you to kill the Guv so bad, but that means keeping him around will make for some great stories

Well, too late for that.

3. Do you have plans to have some characters experiment sexually (gay or bisexual)?

Carol would have done it in a minute if Lori had been up for it. There will be more of this type of thing eventually... or rather some of this type of thing... because there hasn't been much of any yet.

It would make sense for a new character or even some of the existing ones to sexually experiment. These are dire times, base instincts are a huge driving force.

I don't care what others say of TWD this title is not stale or treading water at all. Shit is always hitting the fan or about to hit the fan and spray everyone.

Sophea Uk
Saem, OR

P.S. Yes, Uk is my full last name. Cambodian in the house!

Yay! Thanks for the kind words, Sophea.

Dear Kirkman,

You weren't kidding... no one is safe.

But why is it so hard for our beloved cast to kill the Governor? At least his fat henchman finally bought it. I actually cheered when it happened! I couldn't stand that character. Such a k-ss-ass.

Poor Axel... I really liked him. I was happy for him when he finally got some tail. I also was hoping he would survive this ordeal so we could see him try to adjust to life outside the jail. Oh well.

I was very sorry to see Axel go as well... but that's life.

And please get rid of Lori. I really liked her at first but now she's just getting annoying. Have Rick raise the baby by himself. Well, with the help of Carl since he's missing a hand and all. That could make for some interesting stories. At the speed things are developing though, the baby would start walking around issue 500!

Can't wait to read the next issue and see what will happen to everybody

Roch Vallancourt

Heh, I assume you've read 48 by now.

Dear greatest writer in the world or multiverse

Rick has no right hand

chain saws look good on right hands

Will you ever put a chain saw on Rick right hand?

or some thing of that matter?

O if you ever do can he say "Groovy"?

Chris hanley
Chicago, ill

This has not gotten old yet. Not even remotely.

I am lying.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me just start off by saying that you are an evil bastard! The end of Walking Dead #47 had me literally yelling "NO! DAMMIT, NO!" That has got to be the WORST cliff-hanger I've ever read. You've got this really intense, action-packed issue, the shit's seriously hitting the fan, and then you end it with Lori at gunpoint? AND THEN YOU DON'T SHOW WHO IT IS?! GAH!

...Why must you be so awesome?

I've got a family to support.

Your loyal, disgruntled fan,
David Baldwin

P.S. I hear you're coming to Emerald City Comic-Con in Seattle this year. Lookin' forward to it.

I had a blast at the Emerald City Comic-con--it's a great show. I highly recommend it. I hope to see you all there next year!

Mr Prolific,

So I picked up the 3rd hard cover of TWD having enjoyed the 1st 2 - I'm not a horror or zombie enthusiast but appreciate great storytelling (not just YOU, Adlard, Rathburn, Wootton too right?) I couldn't wait any longer for what happened next so I bought issues 37-47 & now I'm up to date in what's been released & I've got some food for your thought.

Firstly, I will continue buying the individual issues - maybe as well as the HC's if I can afford to. So now I'm reading (& paying for) Astounding Wolf-man, Brit, Invincible & Ultimate X-men. Am I missing anything?

Marvel Zombies when it's coming out... and there's old trades like Capes and Tech Jacket that you should check out--but yeah, for the most part, I think you've got it all covered. Be on the lookout for Destroyer and Killraven from Marvel and myself in the future. And thanks for buying everything. You rock.

Secondly: how are you so prolific? I'd appreciate any insight into how you write - usually well - on a variety of subjects without all the books falling regularly behind schedule.

Some would argue that I am regularly behind schedule... and I am, a little. But y'know, I write an issue and some change every week... and the change ends up being an extra script or two a month, so I write about 5 or 6 books a month... no big deal, right?

Thirdly, I'm finding a couple of recent events puzzling. Why didn't Michonne just kill the governor (deliberate small 'g' as you have successfully created a character I have no respect for) having snuck up on him with an automatic weapon? Given their history I expected her to take the opportunity. I find it hard to believe she'd not kill him just to get her sword back. Then Andrea misses Philip sniping? Not quite as accurate because of her injury? (see how I'm providing excuses for you? I'd appreciate your thinking though :-)) You've proven adept at killing important characters - I was surprised, horrified by how and sad to see Tyreese go but then for the governor to keep surviving...you better have a HORRIBLE resolution for him in 48. Also, where are the biters in this denouement? Surely a few must have avoided being shot in the head and be trying to eat the Woodbury invaders/prison defenders, especially now the fences are down? Anyway, that's a small amount of questions for the 23 consecutive TWD I've stayed up too late to read.

Okay, Michonne didn't kill gov right away because she knew she wouldn't make it out of that group alive if she just fired--they would have turned on her and shot her down--so she was going to take the Governor hostage and kill him later--but that went to hell too.

Andrea missed because no one is perfect. She hit him in the chest, from the tower--that's pretty damn close. A head shot would have been difficult at that distance for her--she's not a trained sniper... and she was injured.

Fourthly, Andrew J. Shaw. He shows up a lot. Is this a contractual obligation? Sorry if you explained this before I've only been reading Letter Hacks since issue 37.

He writes bizarre letters that entertain me. It's pretty easy to get printed if you do that.

Finally, right now I'm making Andrea best, DON'T kill her.

Theodore Crush
Devon

Andrea's fate remains to be seen... so no promises, but I will say that we do find out, one way or the other, very soon.

P.S. You're reading XXXombies right?

I haven't read all the issues yet, but I started it.

Hey KirkMan,

I've been meaning to write you to let you know what sort of reaction the current arc has wrought.

With the first red label "No One Is Safe" issue in hand, and especially after the double cliffhanger, I literally could not bring myself to read it. You had me so filled with dread that I felt as if my not reading the book could save the cast from their fate. Never had that feeling before, only to have it resurface with the series finale of The Wire, so I thank you for that.

What I finally read was far messier and more darkly comic than I had anticipated. You did an excellent job of subverting and ultimately amplifying the threat of the Governor's crew by showing how raw they were. I couldn't help but laugh as he kept ducking behind the tank - for me, shades of Spanky shielding himself from spitballs in the "Friends, Romans, Countrymen.." bit in The Little Rascals

How old are you?

The net effect was best illustrated in Tyrese's beheading, where you don't allow the reader or the survivors the benefit of a clean slice. Reality is full of gristle and tendons and that's the sort of horror you've best captured so far.

Looking forward to not wanting to read the ending. A quick prediction... does the bit of parka on the cover suggest that it's Michonne that has Lori and the baby at gunpoint?

It was supposed to... and it was supposed to be misleading.

In other news, at the end of Marvel Zombies 2, you said something to the effect of hoping the readers enjoyed it as much as the original. While the story had a number of great premises, it didn't gel for me as a complete story. I feel like it could have been "Dawn" to MZ1's "Night" if it had been paced out a little differently. The meat for me was the Redeemed Zombie Heroes vs. Cortez' Coup. If the Civil War part had been 2 issues and you dropped the redundant and plot-convenient Hulk fight, the intrigue of Zombie Guit vs. Survivor Rage could have had the room to breathe. As it stands, the "Bwa Ha Ha!, "to be continued...?", ending will forever damn the book to sequel status without allowing it to live on its own merits. Just a thought.

Well, the first book ended with a "To be continued...?" also. I was just trying to keep in line with the first. Your opinions are heard loud and clear. Thanks for sharing.

Would you have paced it differently now that it's all said and done?

Thanks and Cheers,
Michael

Probably not. I like the Hulk fight. I like the way it ended... I don't think I would have changed much of anything. I'm pretty proud of Marvel Zombies 2.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
I have never written a letter to a comic before, but with recent events in my life, I've felt compelled to. A week ago, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer and had a tumor removed. Being a healthy 40 year old male, this has shocked and humbled me on many levels. I just want to thank you for The Walking Dead series. The terrific artistry and spectacular writing have allowed me to escape my health concerns. Like Rick states in issue #47, "Just get down and let's fight back! We can get through this!" This is what I plan on doing: Fighting back and beating cancer. I hope Rick continues to be a central figure in the comic. He exemplifies the human spirit and it's fighting nature. I would be saddened to see him leave the series but look forward to the current arc ending and the many changes it will bring. Thank you for giving me that monthly escape, and I look forward to reading this title for many years to come.

After reading this issue, I think you'll see that Rick isn't going anywhere just yet. He's been through a lot--but it's only making him stronger. Best of luck to you in your upcoming fight. Please keep me posted on your success.

Your Fan
Kevin J Zaknich

P.S. I just bought the hardback copy of Marvel Zombies. I can't wait to open its pages and enter a new Kirkman world. Keep up the great work!

I hope you enjoy it.

Hyia !

Dear Crew...
You killed Tyresee and it's just... ok. It's your story, it's your world. Even with all heroes dead (but still walking) this will be one of best comic EVER. Still... It's a shame Tyresee died slowly, painfully, and without dignity from hands (uh, hand) of such a degenerate jerk

That's just so cruel. Awwwww, so cruel. MAAAAAAAAAAN, SO CRUEL !!!!!

it seems nobody needs zombies anymore. People were, are, and will always be each other greatest foes. :o]

Take care.
- Rain

P.S. Who's this ? Whose boots are these ? Michonne ?

P.S.S. Please reconsider rule "one hero dies every episode". Pleeeeeeeeeeeease

There was never a "one hero dies every episode" rule. That said, heroes are safe in this series for a little while at least. We haven't had a death in two issues and counting.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

If you don't mind i would like to ask you some questions, I'm very curious about the walking dead. I have looked all over for a better comic on zombies, and nothing has come close to your delightfully grim yet highly addctive series. Anyways the questions...

1. Who is more like a pirate? Philip with his eye patch or dale with his peg leg?

Peg Leg beats Eye Patch.

2. Are we going to see zombie animals or are you following max brooks' rule on that zombies can only be human

That's a Romero rule, right? Either way I follow it.

3. Do you ever put little "Easter eggs" inside issues, such as putting zombie celebrities or adding quotes from movies?

Burt Reynolds' mustache appears in every issue.

4. Are we ever going to see walking dead pals... or have you made them and i just couldn't find them?

I don't know what you're even talking about.

5. I'm guessing the outbreak in the story is not a virus (i award you 30 exp. for originality) any hints to what it is. I know in the past you've said you're not releasing that information anytime soon, but i figured I'd ask anyways

I'm not telling.

For now that's all. I would like to say thank you for making a wonderful comic that is just as fun to read a second time... and many more times after that. Also thanks for keeping the price minimal and not putting any of those annoying ads in between pages

Can't wait for the next 50 issues
Michael Olvera

P.S. know that because of the extremely... cliff hanger ending in issue 47 I've attempted to freeze myself and then have my friend thaw and revive me when 48 comes out.

How'd that work out for you?

Hi Mr Kirkman,

I have been an avid reader of "walking Dead" from issue 1, I have loved every twist and turn of the plots even the ones that really "piss you off!!!", The reason for my letter is just to say you are really hitting the mark every month, and i just wanted to say it is like watching your favourite zombie DVD, getting to the end titles and reaching for your remote to stop and eject, only to see the screen turn back and the film starts up again! Every horror fan always wanted to see the "what next" and now we have it in spades!!!!!! keep up the good work on Brit and The Astound ng Wolf-Man too

Russell Wakefie d

Thanks. That credits rolling and then the movie starting up again is a good way of thinking about it--I think I'm going to steal that.

Mr. Kirkman

Thank you for 50 issues of excitement, fun, thrills and controversy. I really enjoy WD from cover to letter hacks, heck, I even enjoy the ads, because I know ths may be books I would also enjoy (you made me buy Sea of Red among others, great book btw.). I hope TWD will go on many other 50 issues, so it will continue to be one of the first books I read every month.

That's the plan.

Oh, and I'm very excited, if aliens will show up in #75 for real!

Keep up the good work (and make Marvel Zombies an ongoing)!

-Andreas Guenster

It's funny that we're so close to issue 75 now. I mean, when I made that joke in the early issues, that I would run out of ideas and put aliens in the book in issue 75... I didn't really know if we'd make it to issue 75, and if we did... it seemed like it would be so far off. Now it's just two years away--crazy. I

better start coming up with some alien races.

Hello Robert Kirkman,

Question: What is Robert Kirkman's favorite type of candy?

I'm not really into candy all that much. Can't say I have a favorite. Candy bars and stuff are all equally delicious, but I'm not one to seek them out very often.

First I want to say I enjoy The Walking Dead very much. Whenever it comes out, it is a ways the first book I read. But I have a few complaints for you. In 2007 I stopped buying the book and sold all of my back issues. The only reason for this is the terrible release schedule. It is ruining the book for me, so much that I can't see myself going to the comic shop to purchase it anymore

Cry me a river. We've got a better shipping schedule that about 50% of the comics out there. You're getting issue 50 at least four months shy of our fifth anniversary. The schedule isn't that bad. I really don't see what we're being compared to. Find another writer/artist team that have done as many issues as Charlie and I in the same amount of time. I can think of maybe TWO. Our schedule isn't perfect... but it's really not THAT bad.

It always seems to be the first thing people talk about when a new issue comes out. The Walking Dead is becoming known for being ridiculously late. I'm not looking for any excuses or reasons here. I know it's more than most indie books, and this is Image, not DC or Marvel. I'm just letting you know that, for me, the schedule is really hurting my enjoyment of the series.

I'm not sure if it's bad writing, bad art, the 2-3 month breaks in between some issues, or just a combination of all of that... but even up to the current issue I have a very difficult time recognizing/remembering some of these characters. And I know I'm not the only one having this problem, I have heard quite a few people complaining about this. For a book that focuses so much on the characters, I don't understand how this can be a problem so far along in the series..

It's not a problem for most, thankfully.

That's all for now. I'll still keep on reading no matter what, I'll even be here when the aliens arrive in 75. and they had better!

-JordanM85

Answer: Tyreese's Pieces.

Oh, you were being funny up there... and I went and actually answered the question.

So you're still reading then? That's cool. After issue 48, you shouldn't have much trouble telling the characters apart. So you should be okay. And y'know, despite me feeling that our schedule isn't all that bad, I really would like to get the book out 12 times a year... it's something I'm working toward. We'll see.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Associates,

I have been reading your book since around Issue 3 or so. I just finished reading issues 46 and 47. Just some background on me. I'm a black man from Jamaica who recently became a US Citizen. Hooray, me! As you might imagine, Tyreese's death shocked me as it did most of your other readers I'm sure. I didn't respond to the whole Michonne rape thing, basically because bad things happen to most of your characters. I didn't see Michonne's rape as being any more horrible than Rick getting his forced amputation. However, Tyreese's death wasn't even a one or two panel death. You had to show multiple panels of the Governor hacking away! Honestly, seeing a character who has been present that long die in such a gruesome manner had a huge emotional impact. I guess that's a compliment to both your writing and your artistic team. I don't know if you know this, but it's pretty much a stereotype that the first people to die in the horror flicks are the black characters and the people having sex. Lo and behold, guess who the next two characters to die are? The black guy Tyreese, and Axel who just had some nookie that same issue.

Well, the Axel sex thing was because I wanted that character to appear to have some kind of relationship forming so his death would be all the more tragic--but maybe that's why the sex/death cliché exists.

As a minority, I don't see too many characters who look like me in comic books. So at first, I got truly pissed when Tyreese bought the farm. After a while though, I actually saw that apart from Rick, there aren't too many other characters whose death would make that great of an emotional impact. You did kind of fall into horror genre cliché, but I see now that Tyreese really was doomed from the arc began. There are numerous white characters who fall into gruesome fates throughout the series, so I really shouldn't expect any person whatsoever to escape harm. I'm glad that you actually wrote some believable black characters in the series, and I expect that the victims of this arc, and especially Tyreese, will have their deaths impact the survivors for quite some time. Tyreese was probably the closest thing to a brother that Rick had, so I look forward to seeing the impact on him

Thanks for being so damn reasonable. Also, please take note that Tyreese is far from the last black character that will be introduced into the book. There's plenty more issues yet to come.

Closing thoughts, I can tell that Rick was freaked out in #47 when his son expressed such a grim viewpoint. I think the effects of their reality on the children really evaded Rick. Lori mentioned it a few times, but I don't think he understood what might happen. Kudos to you for starting down that road. I think the mental effects of following generations are something that we as readers don't think about often. BTW, how come there aren't more pregnant women? I guess the prison might have had condoms, but no-one brings up choosing not to have kids! How about seeing a conversation or two on this matter?

My only remaining real anger about this whole arc is the knowledge that the governor won't be able to suffer as much as the survivors have because of him, or how much they will have to dealing with their emotions in the aftermath. I would literally like to see him get tortured again, but for 2 or 3 issues perhaps. Of course, I'm sure some of the characters feel the same way. Michonne still doesn't know what happened to Tyreese, so I await her reaction. I'm also waiting to see how our crew deals with the members of the Governor's followers who are still alive. Some of them followed freely, but I'm sure some were intimidated or misled into following his orders. Kill them all, or will they try and integrate some of them to bolster their ranks?

The Governor's death was probably pretty painless--and he certainly didn't suffer as much as most have due to his actions... and that's unfair, but y'know, that's life.

I will continue to read your great book for as long as you keep up the great writing. By the way, I live in Atlanta, and we do have a sizable hispanic as well as a not insubstantial asian contingent. In the idea of racial equality, I look forward to seeing some of them bite in the dust in a horrific manner! Keep up the good work!

Nataki Embden

Hey, Martinez was beaten to death after being hit by an RV. That counts right?

Yo Mr. Kirkman

I just read the first 7 volumes of the walking dead, and HOLY CRAP!! At first, I thought it would just be like some of the other zombie movies out there. But man was I wrong. After catching up and reading all the rest of the issues, I'm happy to see Rick still kicking and Lori still taking care of the baby. But I saw what you called this latest issue arc, and I'm bracing myself for someone major to die off, maybe Rick, maybe even Lori!! Seeing Tyreese go down like a bad guy in kill bit getting his head sliced was pretty cool. I just got a few quick questions.

1) Any chance we'll see the main characters get to another country? Maybe an Airport? That would be KICK ASS. How do you survive, where would you go, where would you land? What country would you know is safe?

Not a very big chance they'll make it to another country unless it's Canada or Mexico. There probably aren't a lot of pilots sitting around. We'll see.

2) Will we see how the government collapsed? Will we see a flashback to how the outbreak all began? What if the survivors found a news van or some tv station that has some kind of recording that makes them question their status, or if they should continue on as they have?

It doesn't interest me, for the time being, to go back and show that early stuff. I may change my mind eventually.

3) Would you be willing to have someone do action figures/models of main characters of the series. I could see a MICHONNE figure selling like crazy. maybe a Rick and an Andrea or Glenn or Hershel. All of them would be cool figures to collect. think about it.

Todd McFarlane is thinking about it...

As always, Keep up the great work, man. We all know you got a lot of other stuff, with Ultimate X Men and all (My other favorite of yours) but don't kill THE WALKING DEAD, it's a great book with great art, and you have some gripping stuff in it

Can't wait to see issue 48, and i hope we see this book go to issue 100!!!

Charles Fuchsel

You and me both, Charles. Although I did leave Ultimate X-Men recently, I can assure you that I don't plan on ever quitting The Walking Dead. I'd like to do 1000 issues.

Kirkman--

Awful. Awful stuff.

That's not a criticism, just saying, you really blew the roof off of the good thing our guys had going...

I just put it down and I'm reeling; I didn't expect quite so stark a break between where we've been and where we're headed. And frankly I'm scared for Rick and Carl. That makes me kind of a pussy, doesn't it? I mean, it's just a comic.

It kind of does, yeah.

Been meaning to write in regards to a couple of things

I was crushed to see Tyreese killed, especially at the hands of the Governor. I thought this was going to be a comic about seasonal crops and yearly harvests at the prison. What's going on??

How much fun would THAT have been?

And I want to congratulate you on having persevered long enough in the meat opera to now be seeding influence on your peers; where at first you were plagued with uninformed questions about this title's opening (way back when) and its resemblance to 28 Days Later, now let the letters start rolling in on how much like TWD Romero's own Diary of the Dead seemed. Guys in an RV episodically going from one location to the next... If only Romero had a monthly letter column where you could send endless letters under your many pseudonyms and noms de lettercol asking why he had to bite your style and couldn't come up with a story of his own. If you still haven't seen it yet (and to all of those who have) I have only this to say, "Hi. My name is Samuel."

Don't blame me for that movie!

No need to defend Romero's process -- I'm just funnin'.

I still love the man but Diary was not a good movie.

But really, man, you're a bastard with Lori and the baby. Talk about a double-switcheroo with the cover of the last issue -- Lori and the baby in imminent peril -- which I knew was going to be an unrealized threat and then bringing it around to come to pass anyway... Crushing.

Please, alien invaders, come soon and take me -- I mean, Rick and Carl! -- from all this death and horror.

Andrew Garcia-Price

Countdown to aliens, 25 issues.

Dear Kirkman,

What, no letter printed? I'll blame it on Scott Spencer's 4-peat (four letters in a row). Hmm, more like The Running Dead this issue, huh? It was kind of exciting--the best issue of this I've read for ages. I actually liked the Governor getting his brains blown out and stuff. So Rick's wife bought it, right? What about the baby...? Again, quite exciting; loads better than the other comic I read today: that Stephen King Horst Snut...boy is that a waste of time, eh?

Andrew J. Shaw

Thanks for explaining what you meant by "4-peat" I was a bit lost there. You're at two letters and counting now--so that's good. You should be happy. I'm glad you liked issue 48.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
You, Sir, are very good, the cliffhanger at the end of #47. I thought Lori was sure to die. Then in the beginning of #48 it's Alice trying to fool The Governor and his lackeys. I didn't know who was going to die. Only to kill Lori and Judy a couple pages later. I did not see that coming. Nor did I think The Governor was going to get what he deserved in this issue. How you come up with some of this Who Knows but it's great. This is the only book that I have to read as soon as I get home. I know you, Charlie and Cliff must get tired of hearing how great this book is, But I must tell you again. THIS IS ONE GREAT BOOK. I cannot wait to see what's in store for the future

Thanks for your time, Cary Shenk

Yeah, I'll be honest with you, things did change a bit in that arc while I was writing it--originally, Lori and Judy were going to die in 47, but then I moved things around and it got shoved into issue 48. Which, on one hand, made that cool twist with Alice possible, which resulted in the death being more of a surprise, but at the same time, it made it to where most of the deaths in this arc took place in one issue--which wasn't originally the plan.

Robert,

I just read issue 48 and..... is there anyone your not going to kill? By the way, thanks for signing all those books at A+ Comics.

Patrick Byrne

I draw the line at real people. I would never kill a real person... at least, I don't think I would. I look forward to seeing you again at A+ Comics in Lexington, KY real soon.

Wow.

The "No One is Safe" storyline has been the best thing I've read so far this year, good sir!! It takes a lot of balls to pretty much kill off the ENTIRE supporting cast. Every month was a crazy, intense ride with these characters and every month it only got better. I can hardly wait to see where the new direction takes us. Keep up the great work you guys!!

Duane Hand

Just wait until you see where we go next.

Kirkman,

Just finished Issue 48. You dick, you made my wife cry

Greg Wagner

Heh, that's not the first time I've made your wife cry! Oh come on--it was right there. You can hardly blame me, right? Right? C'mon! I'm joking like I've had sex with her... that's funny right? The crying is a little odd, I know... but it happens. It's also an implication that my penis is unusually large, which makes it even funnier, right? And... uh... ISSUE FIFTY! WOOL

Hey

I don't really know what to say. I've been reading comics for 25 years and the walking dead's new issue one. Never written a letter to a comic before. Issue 48 was the most disturbing comic I have ever read in my life

I can't help thinking that Carl saved his father's life. I'm not sure if that's how you intended it in the script but that's how it read on the page.

Is Andrea also dead? If yes, that would surprise me as I always picked her as a real survivor.

Thanks (I think).

George Carbone

Andrea's fate has yet to be revealed, but we will learn very soon, I promise.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just read TWD #48. Holy shit! Everything IS different now.

Shocked,
John Kostelny

Well, not really... I'm still writing, Charlie's still drawing, Cliff's still toning and Rus is still lettering... so yeah, the stories on a bit of a different path, but it's nothing crazy. It's just different enough to make things interesting.

Hey Kirkman,

I haven't felt the need to write in since after I read issue 23, but I just read the big one. The BIG ONE Number 48. I don't think so much has ever happened (or will ever happen) in a single issue. WOW. When you said no one was safe, I wasn't expecting this. Some deaths didn't really faze me, namely Axel and Patricia. Axel, though he's fun, has never had much development, and as readers we've been taught to hate Patricia since she first entered the picture. Some deaths were sad, such as Billy and Herschel. I had hoped they would stick around, since recently Billy has really been fleshed out, and as for Herschel, the guy just deserved a break. The baby/Lori combo wasn't sad--it was devastating and twisted. You have no idea how much hate mail you're going to get for killing a mother and her baby

So far... not much, really.

I think the final word for this issue is WOW. Usually I read Walking Dead, put it in my collection, and forget about it until next month. This issue, however, will stay with me forever. You have successfully scarred me for life Mr. Kirkman. While I cry myself to sleep, all I can do is hope that Dale, Andrea, and the twins made it out of the ordeal okay.

Thanks from a guy who can't decide whether he hates you or admires your courage in writing something this sick,

Jackson Buckey.

Here, let me help you... you admire my courage and think I'm very handsome and smart. Hating me wouldn't be very cool.

Mr. Kirkman-

What can I say? I just finished issue forty-eight (twice) and have to congratulate you. Even though we all knew people were going to die (probably en masse) you still managed to shock with nearly every issue of this last arc. I feel like your story telling prowess only improves as this book goes on. In the nearly three years since I've returned to collecting comics (for which your book is responsible, as I said in the letter you printed previously in #32) Walking Dead is the only one in which I haven't been disappointed at some time.

Even invincible which I love who's heartedly has annoyed me at times-like now, I feel that the book deserves a much more interesting build-up to #50.

Well screw you! Seriously, though not interesting enough? Maybe. Personally, I think the stuff that comes AFTER issue 50 of Invincible is way cooler than anything before it--but the stuff before had to happen for this stuff to take place... but enough about that book.

Sorry, I digress, perhaps I wouldn't feel a little let down in Invincible's build-up if Walking Dead's hasn't been so amazing. The covers, the deaths, the battle, the emotion, the deaths...I was legitimately saddened and angered when Tyreese was killed, I believe it's rare in the world of comics that readers actually have their emotions significantly altered by the comics they read. I mean did anyone actually care when Captain America was "killed?" But this issue has affected me even more. I mean, I didn't even care about Lori that much as a character, but when she was killed I felt it...I had to pause at the page and absorb it. Great stuff. The same with Hershel, Billy, and Alice, really saddening and powerful.

I'll stop gushing now, you want some numbered questions? I have a few:

You can keep gushing if you want... oh, nevermind.

1) Is the comic going to be a little more like Invincible, in that its going to have a few different threads that are followed? As it looks now, there are three different characters that need to be followed. Michonne, Dale and the R.V. crew, and Rick and Carl. So...how will that be dealt with?

You'll see as we move forward. I'm not really wanting to change the style the book has had so far... and so far we haven't really had any transitions and subplots like that... so maybe there's your answer right there.

2) Or speaking of that...I loved the mutiny against the governor and the woman Lily- are you going to follow Woodbury folks too, or are we to assume she (and everyone else) was killed during the beautifully done two-pages where their bullets ran out?

I'm not going to say they were all killed in that moment, but it's very unlikely that we'll ever see them again. The prison is dead to me. I've moved on and so have the characters.

Probably a dumb question that will have been answered by the time I would read an answer, but...you hinted in an earlier letters page about the Woodbury "doctor" who repaired the governor, and that he might be back...

He's probably still in Woodbury, pretty much alone, taking care of the Governor's "daughter."

3) Do you feel like you killed some of the characters without explaining enough about them, or too preemptively?? I don't mind that they are killed off for the sake of the story, but I wondered if you had regrets. Like, with Axel, because he was awesome. Or...now you can't explore Herschel's strange overt religious tendencies...as you hinted would be built upon...etc...

I think I've done enough with Hershel for readers to fill in the blanks. He lost his wife and used that to strengthen his beliefs. It's all there, really. No need to really dwell on it. I would liked to have done more with Axel, as I think I liked him as much as readers did--but I felt it was unrealistic for him to die and I wanted it to just be Rick and Carl who made it out of there. I liked Alice too, and planned on doing more with her--but y'know... I had to kill SOMEONE.

4) You're basically making this all up as you go aren't you? I know that's not totally true, but as it relates to my last question, you must decide to change things on the fly quite a bit, how do you do that and stay consistent with your overall vision for the story?

Well, I will admit that I've done maybe FIVE things since the beginning that were spur of the moment twists I came up with on the fly. And at times they did derail the main story but I felt it was important to do them and be spontaneous. That said, it's only been five or so things, so it hasn't changed my big plan very much at all.

Alright, I just read my questions and they kind of come off like I'm expecting a lecture...but you know, answer what you want.

I thank you for an amazing read every month (or so) with not only Walking Dead, but Invincible and the Woman as well

Take care.

Adam Mitchell

You're welcome and thanks for reading.

It's been a long time since I've written, but you might like to know I've never stopped reading

Liking the Kirkmania site, still enjoying Invincible, but this is about Walking Dead 48

This fucking blew me out of the water. It was shit-piss-holy-death-murder-awesome-hell-feathers amazing. I hurt every time someone died, so I hurt a lot. Even when the Governor died it hurt. In a book that centers around death so much, so far along in the story, to feel each one and to make it count for something, is a true accomplishment. I salute you, sir

--Ryan Walsh

Good to hear from you Ryan. I see you talking about my books on the Jinxworld forums, although, I rarely lower myself to the level needed to go to Bendis' site. You've been reading since the Battle Pope days--and so I'm glad to see I haven't alienated you yet--maybe soon though... here's hoping.

OoooOOOoooh, so that's what you meant when you said, "Nobody's safe."

Fred Chamberlain

Heh.

Dear Mr Kirkman

First off, TWD is the only comic I buy. I have a standing order at the local comic store and consider your story the finest in zombie history.

Nextly, holy fucking shit. Issue 48 made me want to barf, in the best way possible. I've never been so devastated by a COMIC BOOK. Lori dead, huh? The way I see it, there's no way Lori can survive a shot like that, but it does seem possible that Judy might have made it... the bullet didn't seem to hit any vital part of the baby. Thanks for that gruesome thought, by the way

Lori and the baby are dead! I promise. I'm not even trying to be coy about it and lie in the letters column... they are totally dead. The only reason you didn't see the blast blowing the baby in half is because I thought that would be in pretty poor taste. So yes, both dead--I promise.

Your story is incredibly well-written, I'm just worried that you're killing off characters faster than I can enjoy them. If Andrea dies, you'll probably get another letter from me

Uh-oh.

Despite my emotional attachments, I think that this miserable, horrible arc is only going to make the story better by forcing it in a completely different direction. No one REALLY wants to read a comic about people just hanging out inside a prison, right?

And if you kill Carl, I'll doubt the idea that Rick would even bother continuing to live. So, thanks for your HORRIBLE FUCKING APRIL FOOL'S JOKE. (I was seriously upset!)

Heh, I'm sure most people don't even know what you're talking about.

Love,
Brittany Lise Waterstradt

P.S. - Super Mario Galaxy rules. You're a genius.

I'm a genius because I agree with you that Super Mario Galaxy is better than anything in this world? Hey--whatever, I'll take it.

Hi Mr Kirkman,

I like your comic , and i have been read walking dead 48 , but ... YOU KILLED A BABY , on my god YOU KILLED A BABY oh my god i got nothing else to say after i read this issue , and i feel like i'm about to cry , YOU KILLED A BABY

ARIO MALVI

I'm a baby killer!

You went too far. Sorry I'm out

Rebecca Pierce

Well... that just hurts.

For the record, I wrote Rebecca back to get a more fleshed out response from her... and she ignored me. She's obviously pretty pissed.

Captain Kirk!!!! (ok, sorry i HAD to say it)

I just picked up WD 48 today and HOLY CRAP!!! I have never been afraid to read an issue of a comic book before in my entire life before today. I was shaking as i started reading. This is my first letter, so I have to tell you how much i love this book. Anyways, to the point.... Now that the Gov. and his presumed second in command are dead, who is in charge of Woodbury?

Nobody!

Where did Michonne go? Is Lori still alive? SO MANY QUESTIONS!!!!

That you should have the answers to by now! Yay!

Every month something new and crazy happens. Do you have any more zombie comics in the works? Anything new and exciting coming down the pipe with Marvel? Thanks for the great comics and keep up the good work!!!!

James Jackson
Wichita falls, TX

I think I'm swearing off zombie comics for at least the rest of my life. The Walking Dead is it for me. Maybe another Marvel Zombies... eventually. But for now... just this book. I'm already known as the zombie guy. Which, I shouldn't really complain about it, because zombies have been very good to me... but yeah.

P.S. I read in the letter hacks that you haven't read World War Z yet... after you read the book, check out the book on CD. It has some really cool voice talent on it, including henry rollins... great stuff

I recently bought the book... and I'm going to read it soon, I hope. Or at least the first 80 pages or so.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have discovered The Walking Dead a few months ago. I first started reading the trades. I read volumes 5, 6 and 7 in one night; I just could not put them down. And then, it finished on the biggest cliffhanger yet, the general about to attack the prison. There was no way, strictly no way I could wait several months for the next volume. So I switched to the ongoing issues.

HAH! My plan worked!

Rarely has it happened that a comic delivered a genuine rush of emotions. From fear, to horror, to sadness, to hunger, to exhalation, and desolation. The biggest feat is that it all happened in a single issue, which is astounding.

Fear, knowing how impossible the situation turned against our team of survivors. Horror, witnessing the gruesome death of Patricia, quickly followed those of Billy and Alice. And then, possibly one of the most shocking images in comic book history, a woman carrying a baby where both of them... I can't find words to describe this, unspeakable, indescribable... "Lovecraftian" would be a most accurate, minus the tentacles. I just plain paused on that page... simply shocked. Sadness, for both Rick and his son... and Lori and her baby. And then the thirst for revenge. I desperately wanted to see the Governor get his long deserved death. I angrily read the following pages. Exhalation, goodbye Governor! And finally, desolation, for both Carl and Rick on the final pages.

Most comics (same goes for books and movies), rarely make you truly feel the emotions. You just know something sad or happy happened, but you do not really feel it. But with this issue, I did. I read it an hour and half ago, and still remember those feelings. Like I did recently after watching Pan's Labyrinth, or a few other truly powerful films

Thank you, Mr. Kirkman. This massive story arc closed on a bang, which was no less expected

A devoted reader,

Michel Ouellet

PS: We are lucky that the Comic Code Authority is not around anymore. You would be banned for life (and beyond) from publishing anything.

Yeah, that's totally true. If the Comic Code had any kind of real Authority I'd be screwed for sure. That would really suck. Thank god for things like the CBLDF and the movement to fight censorship in general. This country has been through some scary times and I'm really benefiting from people who came before me and fought the good fight.

Mr. Kirkman,

Just got done reading TWD #48. Wow. I mean it was clear there was going to be a big change, the prison was already ruined by losing its fences, but this just felt epic on every level. It started off with an almost humorous moment in the midst of the chaos with Alice and Lori's plan to trick the enemy causing some confusion and momentary horror on Rick's behalf. Just enough to lull you into a false sense of security about the fate of those particular characters, making their eventual demise all the more powerful.

Later, when they first started their run to safety in a classic 'hero' fashion with bullets wizzing past I was just waiting for one to hit. Honestly, I was expecting it to be Carl. Yet having it be Lori and the baby, then have the woman who did it turn on the Governor. Brilliant. And what's more, the bastard is finally dead! Sure a lot of other people had to die for it to come about, but it was completely worth it. Well... it was mostly worth it.

So now we have Rick and Carl, a one... well, Michonne should still be pretty close, right? Can't wait to see what happens in #49. While I can't see them having much trouble from the (former) Governor's group, what with the zombies descending upon them, this being TWD there's got to be more trouble ahead(which is exactly why I love it). Eagerly counting the seconds until my comic book store opens with the next issue...

-Asia Sorenson

Glad you're digging it. Ask questions next time (I'm only printing this because I think you're a girl--and I want to be kind to my female readers).

Robert Kirkman, you fucking asshole.

You killed them. I can't believe you fucking did that. You are a malignant fucking stain. I've been reading since #1, so I'd say I've become somewhat emotionally invested in this little yarn you're spinning. I was a bit comforted when you put my characters in a fucking prison and kept them relatively safe for what-- like 2 years??? And then you dropkick us all in our emotional nuts in one single fucking page.

You're a monster, and I'm sure you will suffer for this.

Anyway, it was a great read. Keep up the good work.

Also, burn in hell, you sadistic little scrotal knot.

Peter Hassett

Trust me, if there's a hell... all the homeless people I've murdered will get me in there way faster than any story I've written in this series. Except the one where I killed that black dude--that one was way out of line.

Robert Kirkman,

First off, you are a bastard. A right mad bastard. I just finished reading issue #48 and one of the many things I have to say is fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Oh my god, fuck. That was fucking awesome! I'm just glad that you had the audacity to pull that off. I love your book and its stuff like this latest arc, hell, this latest issue that make me love it.

I spent the past weekend reading issues #3-47, (I'm still looking for issues #1 and 2, sadly I only found the book at issue 4.) and picked up #48 today. The way that #47 ended with a shotgun to the back of Lori's head, I went oh shit. I spent the next month trying to figure out who was behind her. I even theorized that somehow Michonne was going to off her as payback for Tyreese. I wouldn't put it past her because she's unbalanced as all hell. I only wish that you had played on that a bit more, her being unbalanced not her killing Lori. I love how you lured me into a false sense of security with revealing the immediate threat was a ploy. I really should know better. I don't normally fall for that kind of thing. I think it's because, somewhere even in my twisted mind of horror filled pile of gore I call a conscience, infants seem to be the only ones that are off limits from sudden, violent, gruesome deaths. It hurts that you killed Lori and Judith, but I understand. I have my doubts that Judith is dead, but I'm not holding out hope. I'm glad the Governor bought the farm. Too bad Michonne didn't do it. I'm sad to see everyone die, Patricia, Billy, Hershel, and Alice, as well as everyone else. Everything in service to the story, I suppose. As you've stated previously, the world of TWD is a dangerous place, and no one is safe. Everyone is liable to die on the next panel. I thought we all would've learned that lesson when Otis shot Carl way back when though Carl did survive that little encounter.

I love your book. It's one of my favorite post apocalypse stories. The only two above TWD are Stephen King's The Stand and Richard Matheson's I am Legend. Robert you must read World War Z. Just keep it up. I'm looking forward to whatever craziness you have planned next. I can't wait.

Thank you,
Will Crays

World War Z, I'm on it. And don't count Michonne out just yet... I'll be delving into her unbalanced nature sooner or later... she won't be following those footprints forever you know.

Hey, Kirkman.

I'm a new reader. I just finished reading all 48 issues. Last night I read issues 1-24, I seriously had a friggin' nightmare. I just finished up to 47. Then I read issue 48. You are have a sick twisted mind. So when does issue 49 come out?

-Matt

It came out in May--sorry for the delay.

Dear Robert,

Holy F^%\$ing Sh%^\$!!! You were not kidding about killing off people! I have been following this comic since it came out and I am not a huge comic fan, but your teams ability to make the characters walk, talk and become real is...more than I have ever expected out of a comic. You guys have broken more than one taboo since the first issue and this last one...wow. Y'all just broke a big one. Killing off a mother and her new born child?!? Holy S^%\$!!!

You and your team are putting out an amazing story each and every month. I have been buying them at my local comic shop at the start of each month, or when they actually get there, since issue #10. You amaze me and you guys do no let up!

We did one sirs. I expect the shocks, the twists and the awesome to continue for some time.

Great job!
Ford

P.S. If you are able to answer th's question with out the typical, "We wanted to shock our readers", please do Why d'ld you kill off nearly EVERYONE that we have come to care about since The Walking Dead started? Unless you and your team have better characters planned, I can not see how Rick and his son can survive in a world wth the Governor's followers (thank God that twisted bastard is dead, or at least he should be now) after them and a world full of zombies. I really hope they make it and maybe, some how, Rick's wife and h's new born are not dead.

They're totally completely dead--I promise. The reason they all died in 48 is because it was realistic to me that MOST people would die in that situation. I have comics and TV shows where things get REALLY hairy and then ONE guy dies. I think that sucks. So I kinda wanted to say "Oh man... the shit is hitting the fan" and then really REALLY deliver. So yeah, we just wanted to shock our readers.

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I would just like to say that issue 48 was exactly what I had hoped for. Although I must admit little Judith's demise shocked me, I will take solace in the fact that Rick and Carl are alive and.....alive. Great storytelling with th's issue. With this arc, you managed to destroy a large number of comic characters I had deveoped a love for, but you did it in a way that can only make this book better and the surviving characters stronger Great job.

Also while I have indeed received my first Walking Dead shirt as well as several zombie mini bust statues, I have yet to receive my Rick Grimes statue. I know it was ordered since I was working at the comic book store at the time and put the order in. Should I order it again?

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

The Walking Dead busts and statues are all made overseas, which unfortunately makes their release dates very loose. There are shipping and custom issues that can hold things up for a long time. They should be available now.

Kirkman,

What, Carl and Rick survive? You pussy.

Heh. Sorry about that.

Seriously, though, #48 is top-notch and completely true to itself. You warned us no one is safe--you were very explicit about this--but after Tyreese bought it we figured, "Okay, I guess he's the one who d'es so the rest of them won't." It reminds me of (and is a stark contrast to) the Mutant Massacre in the 1980's, where we were led to believe that three X-men would die... only to find that that wasn't quite what Marvel said, they just implied it, and in the end it turned out to be just another marketing scam. (Instant collector's item! Buy ten copies and slab 'em in Lucite!)

Yeah--I really hate that about comics. If you're going to call it a massacre--make it a real massacre.

Dude, now we believe you. We didn't really but now we do

Hands down, the best sequence in the series so far is the BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-CLICK-CLICK-(silence) sequence as Lilly and the others retreat into the prison. No words and we don't see what happens and we don't need to. The Woodburians come to the awful, sick realization that--not only have they been deceived by the Governor, not only have they been duped into committing atrocities--but now they're going to die because of it. The real-life parallels need not be belaboured. This is the stuff of horror; well done, sir.

Tim Moerman

Thank you very much, I'm glad you enjoyed it. I think I speak for all of us here at The Walking Dead central when I say that these past few issues have been the most fun we've had in a long long time.

Damn. Daaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaamn!

– Neil Adams –

P.S. Keep up the great work!

P.S. II: I'm 42 years old, and my mom is going to be very disappointed that I cussed not once but twice in a letter that might see publication. But hey, I know of no better way to sum up my thoughts on what may be the most hard-hitting issue in "Walking Dead" history

P.S. III: My mom will get over it

Wow, Neal Adams--that's totally awesome. I'm a huge fan of your work. Thanks for writing in. Sorry about cussing in front of your mom.

Just when I felt cheated by the first panel in Issue 48 you d'd the unthinkable

You got a big set of balls and you know how to use them.

Kudos to you – baby killer.

Mark Treitel

Yay--I much prefer "Baby Killer" to "The Zombie Guy."

Dear Mr Kirkman,

I own Krypt Of Comics in Las Vegas Nv. I have been reading your walking dead series since day one. I have never been so furious with the ending of a comic to write in but you have finally broken the mold. I'm still in shock as to how issue #48 ended. Not only did you manage to slaughter all of your characters through the book but you have also done it in such a fashion that all I can do is think about these fictional characters and feel as if I have lost something. I wont go as far to say I think of these characters as REAL Human Beings. But for the first time I must say a comic book has hit me to the extent of calling up my wife, Who also reads the walking dead and is on Trade #3 and telling her how you killed everyone including Rick's new born baby and h's wife. At first I felt angry at you for destroying all that you have built up for so long. I even went to the extent of yelling out LOUD, "Fuck this I'm not going to read this mother fucking book any more". Now that a day has gone by and I have time to think I wanted to thank you. I know you get a lot of fans that love your work but I NEEDED to thank you for giving me something that I have never felt from a comic book before, A sensational overwhelming amount of Fear, Sadness, Anger,

Laughter, and Love. You have made me fall in love with comics all over again. Thank you Mr Kirkman for all the time that you have put into your work. It shows that you are truly a master. And by the way did you have to kill the baby???

Krypt Of Comics
Las Vegas Nv 89146
702-877-2665
Benjamin Lublin

Yes, I had to kill the baby. Sorry. I really appreciate the kind words you've got here. It means a lot to me to see this book affect people that way so thanks for sharing. In return, I'm printing your store's contact info. People-- if you're in Vegas, buy some comics from Benjamin here.

Hello,
My name is Bob Ficarra, owner of Metro Entertainment, a comic shop in Santa Barbara, California.

First off, your book is great, absolutely the #1 comic I read the week it ships.

However, the specific reason for my email is I collect original art from my favorite books- please point me in the right direction.

Thanks!
Bob

P.S. How about doing a signing in Santa Barbara?

First off--all original art from this series can be purchased at www.splashpageart.com

Second--I really just don't have time to do store signings these days. I do local ones, because that's easy... but traveling for them is a pain and I can see more people at a con, so for the most part, I just don't do them.

Dear Kirkman,

Alright, you got me. I've been trying for the longest time to switch to reading this book in trades to save money. But after issue 48, I'm in this for the long haul and I'm not looking back.

Ever since you convinced me personally (in Wizard World Chicago a few years back) to try th's book out, it has been one of the most engaging things I've ever read and it hasn't let up. I have to say that Walking Dead is one of the most emotionally brutal things I've ever read. If for any reason I could only buy one book a month, it would probably have to be The Walking Dead. I can't wait to see what's next.

I apologize for the massive amount of praise I've deat here but seriously, th's book deserves it.

Brian Kearney

Thanks, sir. I hope to one day make it back to Wizard World Chicago, it was my first con, and I went there for like three or four years in a row--and then stopped. I haven't been there in years--but someday, I'll return. It's usually a great show.

Dear Mr. Robert Kirkman,

You've killed off most of them. You've even killed a baby.

And that's just amazing.

Where it usually ends in most movies, or even novels, it's just another beginning in the sprawling, cutting epic that is Walking Dead. I can't imagine anyone else taking th's huge a risk with their characters and this just proves that you, Mr. Kirkman, never take the easy way out, and that means everything to us, your readers. Sure, there are enough compelling story lines out there but nothing this challenging.

And that's what I love most about Walking Dead. I get a feel where the stories are going but then I tell myself that, no, he would never dare. And you do dare. And I wince, I stifle a girly scream which comes out a girly gasp, and get my heart broken.

But only issue 48 had me do all of them. All at the same time

And I thank you for that

Thor Balanon

I usually don't print letters that are just blind praise, as much as I like them--but your first name is THOR so you get a pass.

Kirklard Rathton,

The emoticon for sadness doesn't even come close but I type it anyway... :(I don't think they could invent an emoticon to describe what I'm feeling after reading #48 tonight...

Patricia. Billy. Alice. Lori. Judy. Hershel. The Governor. Total effing carnage...

Numbered questions commencing "tear":

1) Is Judy really dead? I mean, gore all over the place sure. And she wasn't crying. But maybe the woman was wrong and just didn't check.

It's probably best if she is gone with the biters around and no one there to care for her but... Being a relatively new dad like you I find that when children are depicted being hurt in any way I cringe. I watched "Doomsday" and had a hard time getting through that first scene with our heroine as a young girl. Sheesh...

I'm with you on Doomsday--that first scene was rough. Judith died a quick and painless death--and y'know, in this book she's probably better off dead.

2) I think that panel with Judy's arm sticking up from underneath her mother's lifeless body and Lori staring at the reader is probably the saddest goddammed thing I've ever seen in a comic book EVER. Adlard ripped my heart out th's issue and fed it to the roamers...

I WROTE that panel and when the page came in i still got a little choked up. That panel is just DAMN unsettling. I mean--it's hard to look at. Charlie did an amazing job on this issue... simply amazing. I couldn't have pictured things turning out better.

3) I LOVED the splash page with the BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! CLICK! CLICK!... Makes you wonder...

This isn't a question! Wait--neither was the last one. What gives.

4) I DID NOT love the ad for next issue with Rick's unseen face. He's gotta be shell shocked about his wife and daughter but is he SHAMBLING in that picture? He's SHAMBLING, isn't he????!! "Everything is different now", indeed...

Well, as you can see in this issue--he's NOT a zombie.

5) Issue 48 had like 12 letters printed from a fellow named Scott Spencer. Is he trying to outdo Andrew J. Shaw (who I'm sure has the record of most letters printed in TWD)???

He holds the record now for most letters printed in one issue--that's for sure.

6) OMG, are Scott Spencer and Andrew J. Shaw in fact the SAME PERSON????!!

They aren't. They type completely differently. Scott doesn't use punctuation or capitalization AT ALL--it's really a pain to reformat his letters to make them readable. And Andrew is always short and to the point--the disheartening, bitter point.

7) Hope you enjoyed my benevolent use of ellipses (...) in this letter!!! All for the love of the aposiopesis...

Keep the dream alive.

8) I hope you liked how I forgot to point out on page 2 of #48 the sudden yet brief reappearance of Rick's severed hand...

That is CLEARLY Carl's hand. I don't know what YOU'RE seeing.

Oh, and one favor to ask: if you happen to get letter-writer Amanda Maynard's address let me know. Sounds like her pantry/attic/zombie sanctuary has room for at LEAST a few more people...

Image is it,
Dan "Kentucky" Benningfield

Yeah, you're just interested in her ROOM--sure.

And that does it for letters in this--our fiftieth issue. Here's to another fifty... and then another... and then another.

Hopefully we'll make it to 100 in less time.

See you back here very soon for issue 51.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hi Readers,

Still hot off the heels of issue 50, here's a vintage interview with Robert, Charlie, and Eric Stephenson.

Enjoy,

Sina Grace

Okay, folks... I'm knee deep in convention season and have very little time to read and respond to mail — so I've asked and the fine folks at www.comicbookresources.com have been gracious enough to allow me to run the interviews that they did with myself, Charlie Adlard, and Eric Stephenson in celebration of the release of *The Walking Dead* 50.

They were conducted by Michael Patrick Sullivan and ran on the Comic Book Resources website over at www.comicbookresources.com or www.cbr.cc if you prefer something shorter.

You should visit their site — they're way cool. Okay — here goes.

ROBERT KIRKMAN INTERVIEW:

Robert Kirkman began his comics career by publishing his own work through the label of Funk-O-Tron. The most notable of this output was the infamous title "Battle Pope." His success there soon led Kirkman to bigger things like a four-issue "SuperPatriot" miniseries for Image Comics, which in turn led him to shutter his own publishing house and put out his own creator-owned projects through Image. In early 2003, Kirkman launched the superhero title, "Invincible," garnering both critical and popular acclaim. Kirkman then followed up on that success with something quite different, a black and white character drama set against a zombie apocalypse called "The Walking Dead," consistently the best-selling black and white title on the stands.

As "The Walking Dead" counts down to its milestone fiftieth issue, Kirkman sat down with CBR new to discuss the fan-favorite work.

"Rick Grimes is arguably the main character," Kirkman said of his "Walking Dead" cast. "He's the only character who's been in every issue so far...and he's the only character we've really focused on at all times. For the time being at least, 'The Walking Dead' is his story. He's a small town police officer whose life has been turned upside down by this zombie apocalypse business. He's got a young son, named Carl who will be taking a more active roll in the book starting with issue 50.

"There are a lot of characters for people to get to know in the book and they come and go as characters die off and new characters are encountered. This book has amassed quite a body count over its 50-issue run."

"There are aspects of different people here and there in the characters," Kirkman said of the basis for the large, though individually distinct cast, whose diversity and lifelikeness have made the book startlingly believable despite

its fantastical premise. "A lot of different characters have aspects of my personality, I think, but for the most part, I'm just making people up. Not one character is exclusively based on one person. Except for The Governor, who is exactly like Joe Quesada. They are literally exactly the same."

As readers have learned, no one is safe in "The Walking Dead." The book has seen a great many characters leave it's pages, including some popular, well-liked ones. Kirkman said, though, that it doesn't get harder to make the death toll climb, no matter who it may be. "There have been times where I've held off on killing people because I didn't think they had become established enough. It's more fun to kill the characters that I'll miss. That has more impact. I've never killed off a character just to kill someone in an issue.

"For the most part, most people die because that's what would realistically happen. I recently killed off a big chunk of characters, not to shock people or shake the book up... but because a situation had arisen in the book where it would logically, be very hard to survive."

Despite their penchant for ending up six feet under, sometimes the characters spring to life in ways that even their creator doesn't expect. Said Kirkman, "There was a point in issue #18, I believe, where right up to the last minute Lori and Rick were plotted to get into a big argument and decide to split up. That was the plan for them since the beginning of the series. I was writing the pages and I was trying to steer the dialogue to where the plot needed it to go. I'd type Rick saying something and then Lori reacting and vice versa and I just could not get them to a place where splitting up was logical. It was like I wanted two people to break up--and they started being rational and agreeable to each other right in front of my eyes... and the scene came to a close with them still together. Weird stuff."

With such a large cast and in a seemingly constant state of flux, as characters die and new ones come onto the scene, some readers wonder whether Kirkman regrets populating "The Walking Dead" with so many substantive characters.

"At times, yeah, I wish there were less characters in the book," Kirkman confessed, "but really that's the nature of this kind of book. The characters live in a very dangerous world. If there were less of them the book would be over by now. I need to inject new blood into the book from time to time. And it's fun dealing with all the different personalities and points of view. So sometimes it's frustrating but for the most part, it's exactly what makes 'The Walking Dead' the book it is."

With such challenges, "The Walking Dead" is an ambitious book that sometimes seems to make its own decisions. Said the writer, "I've had a pretty loose plan that I've followed up to this point that I had worked out before I pitched the series. I had planned for them to arrive at the prison at the end of issue #7--not issue #12. I knew Michonne [a mysterious, katana-wielding woman] was going to show up with the two zombies in leashes, but I didn't know that would be issue #19. So things changed along the way. I always planned on them getting into a battle with another well-established group of survivors, but Woodbury and The Governor specifically came to me as I wrote the series. But

the main points of the book were all in place at the start of the series. There are a few bits left that I haven't gotten to yet. I had big plans when we started this series. "

Kirkman still has big plans. "Once we hit issue #12 or so, and it was clear that we'd be around for a while, my mind just sort of exploded with possibilities. So at this point, I've got a roadmap that could take us to issue #300, assuming the readers want us around that long. Now, that doesn't mean I know what happens in the next 250 issues, that would be absurd, but I've got, like, ten or so big landmark events and getting to them and setting them up has a lot of little specific things that have to happen, so I don't know what issue things will fall in or even what order some of the things will happen in, but it's all just a matter of plugging in the events and working toward them."

While Kirkman has adopted a longer view of the series, it's not an infinite view. "I think the book is destined to end at some point," Kirkman confirmed. "Nothing lasts forever, and I don't see this as a 'Spider-Man-like' series that I would pass on to someone else at some point.

"Also, who knows... sales could tank at any moment and I'd have to end the book. It's unlikely but who knows when I'll say, 'this book is more popular than Jesus and turn the whole fan base against us.

"I really, really enjoy writing this book and all I've ever wanted out of my comics career is the opportunity to write a long issue-spanning story that I control 100%, so ending that seems foolish to me. If I ever saw that I was writing on co-pilot or not enjoying things or if readers were really hating the book, I'd do us all a favor and put a stop to it. Right now I feel like I could write this book for the rest of my life and be completely happy."

As the series has grown, so has Kirkman's storytelling. "I like to think I'm a better writer now and that I consider certain angles that I hadn't or wouldn't have back then," he said. "Who knows? I certainly don't see a significant difference in my writing but I'm sure there is. I think I'm more critical of my work now. I second-guess myself a bit more now than I used to, which is something I hate because it slows down the process a bit. I used to just lay out the ideas and keep moving, but now I examine, consider other angles, I'm doing things now that I probably should have been doing all along."

With that in mind, there is a type of story that Kirkman has yet to depict in "The Walking Dead's" pages, aside from the social, political, dramatic, comedic and horrific tales he tells from month to month. "I think it would be neat if there was a stretch of the book that was more action-oriented," the writer said, "but only if it occurred naturally. It's all about the characters at this point. I just go where they take me."

More than just Kirkman's writing has grown since the series began in 2003. "I've grown a lot as a person since I started this book," said the writer. "I'm almost 30 now, I have a son. My personal life is completely different. When I started this book I didn't have two nickels to rub together. Now I have many nickels, enough nickels. To say this series changed my life completely would not be an overstatement. My career would certainly not be where it is today without this book."

Over the last five years, "The Walking Dead" has amassed a devoted following. "It's very odd. I've talked to other creators about this, but we seek out the negative comments," the writer explained. "I'll go to a message board and skim positive messages about a given issue and then the one I read is the one that starts with 'This book sucks' or 'I quit.' We all do it, I think. It's like the negative feedback is all that matters. I print a lot of mail in 'The Walking Dead.' but a sure-fire way to get printed is to send me a critical letter. I can't do anything with 'I love this book' other than say 'thanks,' so I don't print a lot of those. I actually enjoy the little bit of negative response I get--as long as it's intelligent and not just 'This book needs more nudity and/or gore' or 'Please put out the book in color.' I could do without those."

Added Kirkman, "I think, like most creators today, there's a pretty open line of communication with the fans and myself. I'm super easy to get in touch with and I actually to respond."

Sometimes, with genre fans, there comes a point where they take ownership of the characters they love and become more

possessive of them and, in turn more critical about how they're handled by those whose actual job it is to tell the story. With "The Walking Dead" hitting fifty issues, Kirkman has seen little of this syndrome.

"Not so much, thankfully," said the writer. "I know what you're talking about though, and it's always been kind of funny to me. Everyone in comics gets so bent out of shape about characters acting 'in-character.' Now, yes, Thor would probably never rape someone and Spider-Man wouldn't rob a bank. That makes sense. But if I had Rick cut off his son's head in the next issue, that would seem way out of character, but humans--are y'know, living breathing creatures who sometimes snap, flip out--and whatever. I never show you what Rick is thinking. For all readers know, Rick has been planning on cutting Carl's head off for years. People don't always act consistently with their inner selves and people, on average, do keep a lot of emotions hidden, for whatever reason. Frankly, anyone is capable of anything, and as long as the story is told well, abrupt changes in a person's behavior is quite realistic."

With a solid fanbase and now a solid history both in sales and story, now is the time that "The Walking Dead" would be primed to move beyond it's own monthly pages. But don't hold your breath. Kirkman has earned lots of attention from Hollywood regarding his zombie epic, "but I'm not going to take a deal just to take a deal," he said.

"My creator-owned work is very close to my heart and I'm lucky enough to not really need option money to survive, so I'm waiting for the right deal to come along. I don't want to just farm this thing out. I only want to do it if it's going to result in something good. I will say we came really close once and I was very excited, but this isn't horse shoes or hand grenades, so close doesn't count."

Nor is Kirkman about to start expanding out the series into a comics empire. "I think that's the mistake books make when they become as successful as 'The Walking Dead.' If I did a second series, it would make money--yes, it would be an instant success but how long would it last? I think dividing readers focus is a short-term cash-grab and a long-term detriment to the success of the book. If readers suddenly need to buy two books to get the whole story and they have to keep track of the order things occur in and things get more complicated, it weakens the integrity of the comic. Right now if you want to read 'The Walking Dead,' all you need is issues one through whatever-issue-just-came-out. Those are collected in trade paperback and hardcover to help you along--but you only need point A to point B. You don't have to know that 'The Walking Dead: Fire Bad' issues one to six take place between issues 46 and 47. If I was only in this to make money, I'd do three 'Walking Dead' series. There'd be tons of books carrying that brand, but I'm really here to tell my story, and I recognize how lucky I am to get to do that. I'm not going to do anything to mess that up. "

While a milestone like the series' fiftieth issue inspires a lot of looking back, Kirkman's also looked toward the future, both in the book and for the book. "There's a dramatic shift in the book starting with issue 48," said Kirkman. "I actually don't like talking about what's coming up in the book at all--because we've done a good job thus far of keeping things a secret and the book doesn't seem to have to telegraph upcoming big events to sell well. So things are changing a bit, and if you've read the issue you know what I mean. I will say--the characters are out of the prison. Things are more dangerous and the book is going in new directions it hasn't gone in before. We're all very excited."

Kirkman did drop one hint. "Charlie Adlard going to be drawing more buildings very soon."

"In the real world, [there will be] more issues, more trade paperbacks and more hardcovers," Kirkman continued. "The Book Four Hardcover containing issues #37-48 will be out this year, and our second deluxe hardcover, sometimes referred to as an Omnibus, containing issues #25-48 will also be out in time for Christmas this year.

"In other news, I'm committed to getting the book out on a perfect schedule. I don't like to apologize for our schedule. We've gotten to issue 50 six months shy of five years,

so I think we're doing phenomenally well for an independent series basically because has there ever been another comic that's done that? Maybe 'Cerebus,' but what other independent book has made it to #50, let alone done it in such a short amount of time. That said, there's no reason we couldn't have reached issue #50 in month #50, so that's what I'm working toward; shipping the book even better than we have been. I do feel like we owe it to the fans and retailers who've made this possible. The least we can do is get them the book on a regular schedule."

Since "The Walking Dead" debuted, zombies have become something of a cultural meme and have seen resurgence in virtually all forms of entertainment media, and Kirkman thinks they're here to stay. "I think zombies have risen to the level of vampires and werewolves and will always be a staple of popular fiction -- with highs and lows like vampires and werewolves experience -- but I think they'll always be around in some form or another and I honestly wouldn't have it any other way."

CHARLIE ADLARD INTERVIEW:

Cartoonist Charlie Adlard is a comics veteran who began his career in his native Britain on titles like "White Death" with Robbie Morrison and Judge Dredd in "2000 AD." American readers first saw his shadowy style in Topps' "The X-Files" comics series in the mid-nineties and in "Astronauts in Trouble," the critically acclaimed flagship title from AiT/Planet Lar. After a several years of work-for-hire for many of the major publishers, Adlard found himself with a steady gig on a new and, as fortune would have it, hugely popular creator-owned title, "The Walking Dead," written by Robert Kirkman and published by Image Comics.

In recognition of the book's milestone fiftieth issue, CBR spoke this week with writer Robert Kirkman and now Charlie Adlard sits down with us to talk about his work on the last four years of "The Walking Dead."

For the unfamiliar, "The Walking Dead," follows an ensemble cast as they try to survive a world that has faced a zombie apocalypse. A stark black and white comic, "The Walking Dead" has captured the imaginations of readers with its socio-political undertones and a focus on realistic human drama over creeps and gore.

"It's not a zombie comic," Charlie Adlard told CBR News. "We wouldn't have lasted fifty issues if it was just a zombie comic. It's a character book and it's about the characters and how they survive in an extreme situation. It's more akin to things like, for want of a better word, 'Lost,' the TV show. It's about people surviving in an alien environment. It just so happens that 'Lost' has an island and ours is a zombie holocaust."

Adlard continued, "The general public are aware there's a sort of zombie revival going on and as soon as you say it's a zombie book, I think a lot of people actually get a little put off by that because, you know what differentiates ours from any other zombie book."

Looking back on the series and its large and mostly deceased cast of characters, Adlard of course has his favorites. "Well, Robert's killed most of them," the artist laughed. "Actually one of my favorite characters is still alive, that's Michonne, so that's cool, but I didn't realize until after issue #48 that he'd killed all the characters that I'd actually created, apart from Michonne, because all the other characters surviving to now are from the beginning of the book. I know that's not intentional at all. It's just the way it happens."

"I do have a bigger connection with Michonne because I've been with her right from the beginning. It's nice that Robert gave me just the one," Adlard laughed again. "One left over to hang on to. Hopefully she'll be back again, but there's heaps more new characters coming in. Hopefully he won't kill them off as quickly as some of the others."

Adlard tries not to get too involved with Kirkman's side of the book. "I let him do the writing and he lets me do the artwork," he said. "Occasionally, when we have a conversation on the phone, we'll start talking about what he's planning, I leave him to do what he's good at. I'm not good at that, so most of the time I think, 'you're the professional.'"

"Also, I quite like to read the scripts as they come in and be surprised like a reader is," Adlard added, "so I don't really ask that many questions. It's all right to read them and go 'oh, okay. That's cool.'"

However, being so closely involved with the book means some fore knowledge of events, but even then, surprises lurk in the script pages. Said Adlard. "I know really, really roughly what's going to be happening in the bigger arc. There, again, what he's told me three months ago has probably changed. There were a couple of deaths in issue #48 that I didn't realize he was planning, for instance. So that was as much of a surprise to me as to the readers when I read the script."

Those surprises translate into the highly emotive and fresh artwork, for which Adlard has won much praise. "It makes it fresher for me as well. If I knew every tiny detail as it was coming, I don't think I'd enjoy drawing it as much, because I'm reading it and then I'm drawing it virtually immediately which gives me that sort of excitement."

Keeping himself in the dark about the future of the storylines is just one part of what makes up Adlard's take on the zombie-ridden world of "The Walking Dead." "It's kind of interesting, my art style, because I don't have different styles, but I have different ways of drawing," the artist explained. "I don't change my style radically to suit a story, but I might change, say, equipment or something. Use something like a different sort of pen or brush for a certain story or book I'm doing. It gives it a different edge."

"With 'The Walking Dead,' I do it very quickly. The reason I did it quickly to begin with was that the first issue I had to do had to be done in two weeks. To Image and Robert's credit, they said 'It has to be done in two weeks, but please, please, please, if you can't do it in two weeks, don't worry.' I thought to myself 'No, I'll set myself a challenge. I'll do it in two weeks.' And I did kind of get it done in two weeks, so that sort of established the look."

Adlard continued, "Over the years that I've been drawing it, the quickness has worked in its favor, I think. Because it's a horror book, I think that the sort of sketchier approach that I use for it is more edgy, more angular. It's not so refined, giving it that slicker, more super-heroic look, perhaps. Because it's scratchier, it gives it that grit that more associated with harder-edged sort of stuff. So it's not just me thinking 'I've got to get the book done. Get it quickly. Get it out.' It's something that works with it."

In discussing the origins of the quick-style Adlard employs, he thought back to how he got the "Walking Dead" gig in the first place. "I knew Robert very, very vaguely," he said. "I did a book with Joe Casey, called 'Codeflesh,' for Image. The last three issues weren't actually done by Image, they were done by Robert when he was doing Funk-O-Tron [Kirkman's now-defunct publishing house], publishing 'Battle Pope.' He really liked the series and offered to publish the last three episodes. So he put them out and after that I didn't really hear from him at all until one day, I got an email out of the blue. The email actually started off with 'Do you want to earn money?'

"Obviously he knew that 'The Walking Dead' already was doing well enough to guarantee a certain amount of money. That was sort of his 'in' with me. Luckily, he just got me when I was in, shall we say a 'low period' and looking for work. I had something on the go, but it really wasn't anything to shout from the rooftops. So, in many ways 'The Walking Dead' came along and saved me from going down another road that would have been a lot less profitable."

Charlie Adlard's involvement with the book has done a lot more for him than put money in his pocket. "I've got a lot to thank 'The Walking Dead' and Robert for in the end," said Adlard. "I wouldn't have dreamt in a million years how well this book has done financially, professionally and creatively for me. On a professional level it's changed the way I see how I do things in the industry. Before 'The Walking Dead' I wouldn't have touched a creator-owned book with a barge pole. Primarily because I'm the artist, it takes longer to draw it than it does to write it, I have a wife and two kids, I have to support them, it's just not logical to go down that road the way the industry is at the moment."

"The only creator-owned in this industry worldwide, though

I don't know about Japan, are European books. In most European books they give you a page rate, but in the United States and Britain, with a creator-owned book, you're taking the big risk. You're doing it for nothing. If it's successful, great. You reap the rewards. If it's not, you've basically just done X number of pages for free. Sure, you've fulfilled yourself creatively, but time-wise, you're exhausted and you're poor at the end of it. Doing 'The Walking Dead' has completely changed my outlook on that.

"Also, I'm lucky because I have spare time to do projects I want to do as opposed to doing it because somebody's offering me money for it. I did another project for [AiT/Planet Lar] with Joe Casey called 'Rock Bottom' which was basically, you know..." Adlard laughed. "I haven't received nickel spent for that book. I just wanted to draw it because it was so good. I'm doing a European book now and I've spent two days doing a page where, with 'The Walking Dead' I spend three hours. It's not financially viable to do it for me, but I'm able to do it because of 'The Walking Dead.' It's a fantastic position to be in.

Fans of Adlard's work on "The Walking Dead" have no cause to fear that Adlard's "better position in the industry" will lead him to seek greener pastures. He has no desire to mess with a winning formula. "I've been on 'The Walking Dead' for four years now. 'The X-Files' was only two. I see no light at the end of the tunnel in terms of me leaving the book. I can see another four, five, ten years."

Adlard remarked that he never thought he'd be able to say something like that. Because of 'The Walking Dead,' the artist said, "I can see my career further ahead of me than I ever have before."

ERIC STEPHENSON INTERVIEW:

As Executive Director of Image Comics, Eric Stephenson has seen a great many properties come through the fold of the San Francisco publisher. Some titles flourish, others disappear almost as rapidly as they arrived. Occasionally, one strikes a chord with readers and can be classified a legitimate phenomenon.

One such comic book is "The Walking Dead," the best-selling black-and-white zombie epic written by Robert Kirkman and illustrated by Charlie Adlard. In anticipation of the series' landmark fiftieth issue, CBR News has over the past few days spoken with Kirkman and Adlard, previewed pages from the hotly anticipated issue, and we're joined now by Eric Stephenson to look back on the series beginnings and to talk about what the book means to Image today.

Kirkman was hardly an unknown quantity to Stephenson when the writer came to Image with his idea for a zombie drama. "By the time Robert started talking to us about 'The Walking Dead,' he'd done his first 'SuperPatriot' miniseries and we were pretty far along on 'Invincible,'" Eric Stephenson told CBR News. "I don't remember if he pitched 'Tech Jacket' or 'The Walking Dead' first, but he definitely wanted to do more work at Image, and he was really excited about doing a zombie book. Part of that was down to his enthusiasm for zombie flicks, but he was also interested in doing something other than superheroes."

Stephenson recalled, however, that Kirkman's pitch was met with some concern. "We liked it, but I know Jim Valentino [then-Publisher of Image Comics] did feel it needed to be something more than 'just a zombie book.' Zombie comics weren't really a sure thing at that point, and I think Jim felt there needed to be more of a hook than 'Hey, zombies!' Robert and I wound up discussing the book quite a bit after Jim had voiced his reservations, and my position was that it looked and read well, but that Jim wanted to know would make 'The Walking Dead' stand out from other zombie titles.

"Robert told me that there were going to be some other elements to the story," Stephenson continued, "some sci-fi oriented stuff that would set the whole concept apart from other zombie titles. I think the idea was that the planet was being prepared for an alien invasion or something like that. Whatever it was, I passed that on to Valentino and he seemed to think that sounded different and interesting enough to give the title a green light. A little later, probably around issue six, I asked Robert what was going on with the alien invasion, because it didn't seem like he was setting that up at all.

Robert laughed and said that was never going to happen, that he'd just pulled that out of thin air in an effort to convince us the book was going to be different."

Early on, Stephenson realized the "The Walking Dead" was a bonafide hit. The numbers told the story. "The first issue sold out right away, and then the second one did, too. Reorders were very strong right from the beginning and sales started trending upwards with issue three. There was the standard drop with issue two, but then it went right back up with three and kept climbing from there."

Image moved quickly to support its new breakout title and sustain its heat. "Early on, we supported the book with things like free copies to retailers and overships," said Stephenson, "but I think the most important thing we did was rush out that first trade and make sure it came out alongside issue seven. We've worked very closely with Robert to make sure 'The Walking Dead' is always in print, in as many different formats as possible and I think that's helped immeasurably in terms of expanding the book's audience, both within the direct market and beyond."

Conversely, "The Walking Dead" has also served Image in return. Asked if "The Walking Dead's" high profile has helped Image as a whole, Stephenson responded, "In some cases, sure. We have a pretty diverse line of books, though, so not everyone who enjoys 'The Walking Dead' is going to be interested in the full line. Some horror fans or zombie fans just aren't into superheroes or fantasy or sci-fi or whatever. 'The Walking Dead' probably brings more eyes to our books, but it really depends on the tastes of the individual readers as to whether or not they're going to branch out from there."

"It's certainly put the lie to that old myth that Image only publishes a certain type of superhero comic," Stephenson added.

In an industry that seemingly became infatuated with the zombie genre, "The Walking Dead" survived this invasion of the undead, as its fiftieth issue can attest. Stephenson has his belief on what has set the book apart from and caused it to rise above from the rest of the zombie books that have been published in the last several years. "I think the appeal of the book is the characters," he said. "It's not just a zombie book. At 50 issues, I can't imagine anyone's buying the book just to look at more decaying flesh."

It's a view Stephenson confirms with his favorite moment from the series thus far. "Issue six was an early favorite of mine, I thought the scene at the end of the issue, with Carl and Shane, was really well done," he said, referring to when the ostensible lead of the series, Rick, confronts his partner Shane while hunting. Shane preferred it when Rick was thought to be dead, and even had an affair with Rick's wife, Lori. Shane attempted to get that status quo back by killing Rick, but Rick's son Carl defends his father by shooting Shane in the throat. Afterward, he cried, "It isn't like killing the dead ones." Rick assured him that "it never should be."

"I'm not a big zombie fan myself," Stephenson confessed, "but the characters definitely caught my interest right from the beginning. Issue six, and that scene in particular, was kind of the point where I really got sucked in, though."

Beyond the fiftieth issue, Image will continue to support "The Walking Dead" with trade paperbacks and hardcover omnibus editions. Stephenson says there are further things in the offing. "We have other things planned, definitely, and I do think there are opportunities yet to be taken advantage of by the title. Robert and I were talking about this recently, and I think we've only begun to explore all the publishing options for this book."

Okay — next issue we'll get back into the normal letter answering business — I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello All,

Here we are, at the end of an amazing 52 week look back at one of the most successful and brilliant comics in the industry today.

Thanks so much for being with us. I leave you with a newsarama interview.

All the best,

Sina Grace

Okay, I'm VERY sorry for the lateness of this issue, I hope to be making an announcement soon on how I'm going to once and for all, get this book back on track (without changing a thing--don't worry). Now, speaking of announcements:

Recently, it was announced that I've been made partner at Image Comics. That's pretty cool, right? I'm very VERY excited about the new opportunities that's opened up and since the announcement I've pretty much been swamped with new and exciting things to deal with. SO... I'll be skipping my letters column duties again this month--which is VERY embarrassing, because I know these things are important to a lot of you.

Instead, I'll be running an interview from NEWSARAMA.COM conducted by one MATT BRADY which explains a little of what I've got planned for Image now that I'm sitting at the table with Larsen, McFarlane, Silvestri and Valentino.

Enjoy!

Newsarama: First off Robert, how did this get started? I have a feeling it wasn't something that you initiated?

Robert Kirkman: This came from my relationship with the current partners and publisher Eric Stephenson. They all seem to like me and they know I've got good ideas for the company and would be a strong addition to their braintrust. This isn't just a matter of "his book sells well, let's make him a partner." I'm hoping to

bring much more to the table than that.

NRAMA: What was your gut reaction when you were asked?

RK: I was very flattered. This is the first time in the history of Image Comics that someone new has been brought into the fold.

NRAMA: So what does the position mean? What will your responsibilities be in addition to just creating your books?

RK: I'll be working closely with the other partners to take steps toward strengthening the Image Comics brand. I'll be working with new publisher Eric Stephenson as we hunt down exciting new talent that could use a boost from Image Comics and I'd also like to work with the talent we already have under our roof to do whatever I can to help them grow their readership and strengthen the overall Image Comics line. Don't misunderstand me, this isn't anything more than doing things like talking the Luna Brothers into doing more Ultra or begging Ennis, Palmiotti and Conner to do a sequel to The Pro, or sending Warren Ellis whiskey to entice him and Ben Tempel-Smith to do more issues of Fell. It'll be things like that. Image Comics will always be a place where creators of a certain caliber can do whatever they want with complete and total freedom.

NRAMA: Why did you accept the offer?

RK: With Invincible and The Walking Dead recently passing the issue 50 mark, and The Astounding Wolf-Man going strong and many, many more ideas for creator-owned series bubbling up in my head--it was starting to become clear that Image Comics is my home. It's where I enjoy working the most; it's where I'm treated the best, and all I've ever wanted out of a publisher. What this offer means to me, is nothing less than the opportunity to do my part to ensure that Image Comics will be here for future generations to come, so they can have the same freedom and opportunity I've been given.

NRAMA: We recently spoke to Eric about his new title and plans for the future...tell us about your commitment/vision for Image.

RK: Image Comics was once the leader in this industry. Image led and the other publishers followed. Image Comics can be that company again. Other companies (who will go nameless) will never be able to compete with Marvel and DC on any level; they rise and fall on the strengths of whatever license they hold this week. And with recent missteps at DC I see our two-party system slowly becoming a one party system and that scares me, quite frankly. This industry thrives on competition... that's what keeps things going, the drive to compete--to do battle if you will... and that's what I'm after.

I'm not out to crush other publishers, I don't want to sell more comics and force them to sell less. I want to make comics exciting again, readers have been lulled to sleep by a pattern. Event, follow-up to event, lead up to next event, new event. Wash. Rinse. Repeat. In the process very few new ideas are being brought to the table... it's just the same pieces getting moved around again and again and again and again. And all we're doing with that is maintaining the status quo. That will eventually get old, readers will tire of it. Let's stir the pot a little, shake things up. We need to raise the level of excitement in this industry. This tennis match of creators going back and forth from Marvel and DC is getting old. Let's change the game, bring in a new dynamic. Then we'll all sell more comics. Market share is irrelevant, let's all just sell more comics. That's what everyone wants.

Image has always been about being an alternative... for readers and creators. I want Image to be the premier alternative. That's my main goal.

Image currently publishes some of the best books on the market... and some that are not the best. There are changes to be made that will result in a stronger and healthier Image Comics.

The Image "I" used to make other publishers quake in their boots and it's time to bring that fear back into the world of comics. It's time to wake the sleeping giant. The first step toward this goal will be announced at the Image Comics Panel at Comic-Con, 4pm on Friday... I'd recommend being there if you can make it.

NRAMA: As the Times story pointed out, your exclusive with Marvel is up. Does this new role at Image preclude you from working with Marvel or signing on another exclusive?

RK: I've been doing other creators and the industry as a whole a disservice for the last few years. I worked at Marvel partly to help get my name out there, to gain wider recognition, but mostly because I do like the characters and there are good people at Marvel and I was having fun working there. It's always been assumed that I made my living at Marvel and did my Image books for fun. I've done nothing to dissuade that assumption, but nothing could be further from the truth. Marvel Comics has always been a fraction of my income. Aside from Ultimate X-Men and

Marvel Zombies, most of my Marvel books have been outsold by my Image titles. I never worked at Marvel for the money; the money was insignificant in the grand scheme of things. I had a Spider-Man itch, I had an X-Men itch, I was there to scratch it... and I did, and I've moved on. My plan is to focus solely on creator-owned work for the foreseeable future. Creator-Owned comics is where it is at. Brian K. Vaughan knows this, Warren Ellis knows this, Garth Ennis knows this and I hope, in the coming years more and more people will realize this and take the plunge.

NRAMA: That said, given that you have a larger stake in Image now, will you be scaling back on all your non-Image work?

RK: I've completed all my scripts for Marvel, Destroyer Max, which I'm doing with Cory Walker, is done, Killraven with Rob Liefeld is done. Those are slow burn projects that will be shipping well into 2009, but aside from those and a few odds and ends that haven't been announced yet, I'm currently not doing any work for any publisher other than Image and I couldn't be happier.

NRAMA: Will you expanding your Image work?

RK: Absolutely. I've been banking concepts for the last four years while I was under contract at Marvel. You'll be seeing a lot more from me eventually. That said, I'm going to be holding off on debuting anything new until maybe summer of 2009. Aside from Haunt with Todd McFarlane, that, I'm told, will be debuting soon.

NRAMA: Anything else I missed that you'd like to mention?

RK: I'm making myself available for any comic creators wanting to discuss Image Comics at Comic-Con. I've got a pretty full schedule already but if anyone would like to touch base, please email me at kirkman@funkotron.com and I'll try to fit you in.

So, that'll have to do for this month. I know, I know... I promise I'll get you a REAL honest-to-God letters column next issue. Keep writing letters--please. I'll see you all back here, then.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

I've been pretty light on the letters for the last few months, and the mail has been coming in pretty hot and heavy for the last few issues--in fact, I could have probably filled three issues worth of letters columns with the mail I received for issue 48... so that's for writing in. But, we need to move on from that issue and I do have to keep these letters columns a little shorter at this time so that I can get all these books on time (I promise it'll be worth it in the end) so this issue's letters column will mostly touch on issue 49... but I did want to run this, my FAVORITE letter about issue 48:

"Oh my God... All the time, it was... You finally really did it. You Maniac! You blew it up! Ah, damn you! God damn you all to hell!"

Stan MacDonald

If you don't get the reference... I look upon you in SHAME!!!

Now, onto the response to issue 49... and who better to start with...?

Dear Kirkman,
I want my money back! By my count more than half the panels of this issue Didn't have dialog--but you might wanna go back and check that all the same. No, I didn't get much out of this issue. Please don't do like a 20 years later thing with Rick's son, Carl, in the next little while; cause I can kind of smell it coming. What could issue #50 be about? I smell maybe some new characters...? By the way, if you haven't been getting my letters for issues of Invincible don't worry; I haven't been Getting issues of Invincible.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Ah, another classic. Andrew, would you complain that a movie had too little dialogue? Would you complain that a song had too few lyrics? Comics are words--AND pictures and they use both to tell the story. Sometimes one more than the other--but it's an equal balance. There have been more than a few issues of The Walking Dead that have had TWICE as much dialogue as the average comic... and there will be more like that as the series progresses--but y'know, people have to think and be upset and sleep and have quiet moments from time to time--or the book will just seem fake (or more fake). I'll make it up to you, promise.

And dammit--you should stick with Invincible. C'mon--you know you love it!

Mr. Kirkman,

First I want to say that you are one of my favorite writers and both Invincible and The Walking Dead two of my favorite books out. I haven't seen another writer to be able to take the large cast of characters (even though it seems like you have cut that down drastically in TWD) and give the reader some feeling for each one of them is something that I haven't seen before.

As you can see from this very issue... the cast... isn't so small any more. (Still smaller than it WAS).

Now with that said I just want to say that you are a sick, sick, sick person. After reading one of the most disturbing sequences I have ever read Gov. raping Michonne. Then read one of the most emotional scenes in an issue i.e. Tyreese getting beheaded. Then you top it off with another disturbing scene with Lori and Judith dying. Oh and by the looks of things you are going to leave Carl to fend for himself with the latest cliffhanger in issue 49. Very sick, but god damn can I not put this book down. It is the most interesting stories that I have ever read and you have really given us a book where anything can happen and with your twisted plans I am sure that more crazy issues are going to be coming.

Lastly, are there still plans for an Omnibus vol. 2 in the near future? I have read the each issue individually. But want some more Walking Dead on my bookshelf I have been holding out on the individual smaller HCs for the big Omnibus that I am hoping will come.

Keep going 'till 100
Josh Norman

Yes--Omnibus Volume 2, containing issues 24-48 WILL be in stores in November. So be on the lookout.

Kirkman!

I love Invincible, I love Battle Pope, I love The Astounding Wolf-Man. The Walking Dead owns me. I've been with you from the beginning but I can't stay silent any longer. I cried after seeing the last panel of issue 48. First time ever reading a comic. If you do it again we're going to have issues. I loved issue 49 took me a good 30 minutes to read and there was barely any dialogue!

Did you hear that Andrew Shaw?!

It was a good issue for reflecting on everything that's happened to everyone so quickly. I've been with these people in this impossible situation for over four years now and it still breaks my heart when everything turns to shit. I know you like trying to avoid him in your letters pages, but if this gets printed I want everyone to know that Bendis (though I love him) never has and never could make me care about a group of people like this for so long. I noticed that your TWD readers don't employ the numbered question format religiously in their letters, but I like it so here it goes.

1) Your writing and characterization is brilliant. I love everyone who even passes as a decent human being in this book. Do you get any sadistic pleasure from brutally killing someone I (and maybe other readers, but mostly me) care about? When will you stop breaking my heart?

I get excited when I feel like their death is going to be a definitive moment in the series... like the death of Tyreese. But I don't enjoy that I'm killing them. I don't know--most of the time I know it's coming a good long time in advance, sometimes years... so when I finally get to it, it's more like "oh, here's this scene" instead of "Woo-hoo, I'm killing a dude!!

2) Will you just leave Rick alone for a couple of issues? If he gets any more effed up and lives you're going to have to employ some stupid mutant healing factor for his continued existence among the living. He is still alive after 49, right?

He is indeed. He's also been pretty much unscathed for the last few issues. The poor guy might just make it.

3) I know you love writing this book and that we both hope it goes on forever, but do you have any far reaching events that the book is heading towards or do you just plan out your next move as it comes?

There are two more big events planned for this book--and that'll get us up through 100 and beyond and I'm sure by the time we get there I'll have a lot more planned. The Woodbury arc (25-48) was planned around the start of this series... so yeah, I plan things pretty far in advance.

4) Are there any dogs left in the world? Carl needs a friend badly. Someone that is loyal, protective and won't go batshit crazy. Although if you ever did introduce an animal companion i'm sure it would be torn apart six ways from Sunday.

Most artists hate drawing animals. I pride myself in never asking my artists to draw animals... that said, we just saw some horses--and we'll be seeing more things like that as time goes on.

5) More Astounding Wolf-Man, please?

I'm doing my best.

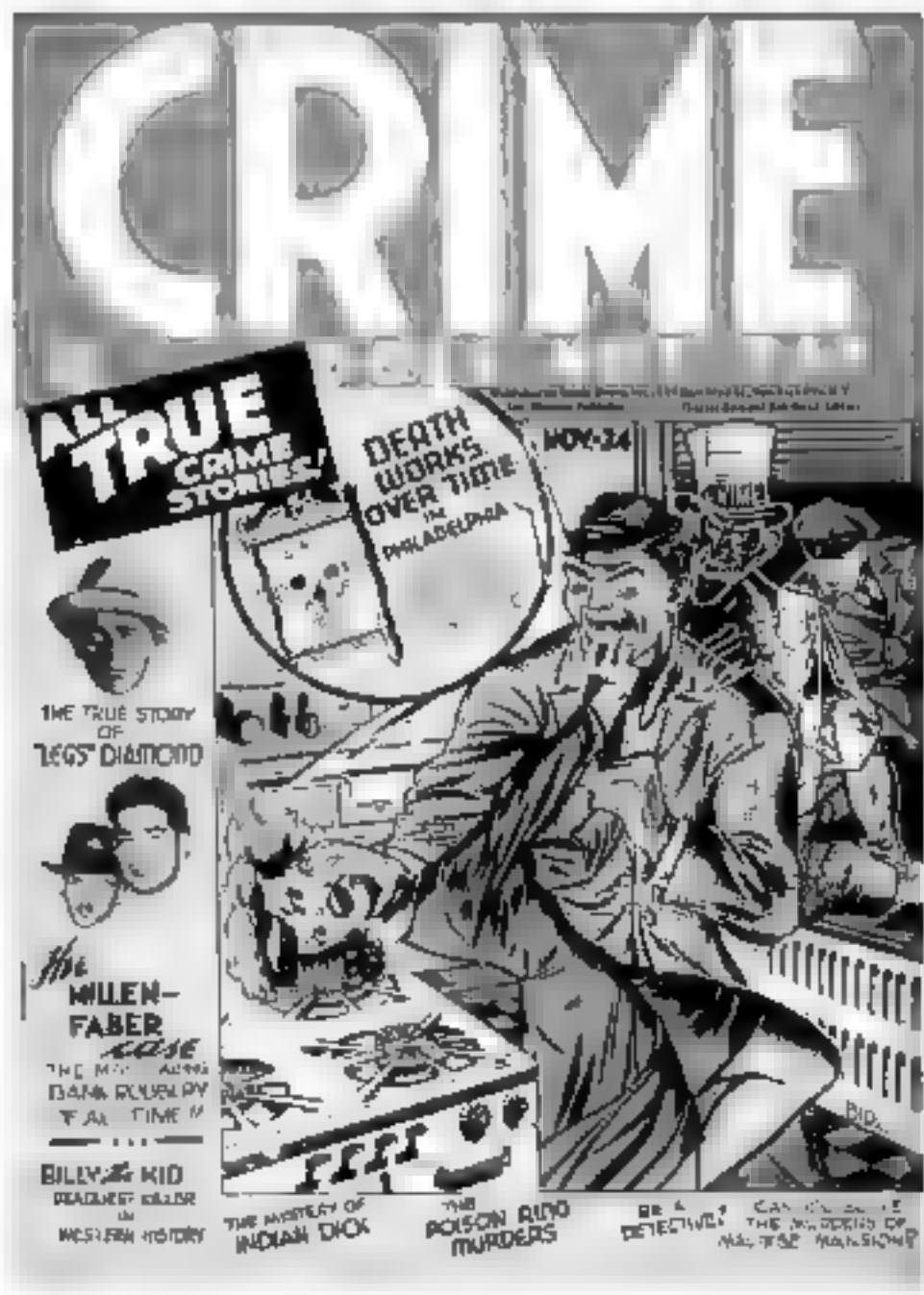
I know you and Charlie can't help but be phenomenal so keep it up! I'd read the book if it was just zombie moans and charlie's art, it's that good.

Your brain dead reader,
Omar

Thanks for writing!

Hey man:

First up, #49 is the best cover so far. And there have been some awesome covers, after four years. My prediction is that Rick comes back as a zombie and Jr. has to put down zombie pop. If that happens, you're a sick. What a way to do a #50 though. I got on board with the Safety Behind Bars trade and I've collected every ish from #19 -- gradually I expected Rick to die in every ish -- except for #49. Dang! #19 is my other favorite cover. Speaking of cool covers, have you ever seen Crime Does Not Pay #24:



Good lord--comics were CRAZY back then!

But Rick's a great hero, and I've been pulling for him all the way. I hope he isn't dead, but if he is, following that kid around this zombie world will surely be a hoot.

I've always hearted Letter Hacks; I've always been a fan of letter columns in general. But I've noticed the writers in Letter Hacks ask the same remarks over and over. If one more person asks "what is your favorite zombie movie" or "have you seen the Dawn remake" I'm gonna barf over my CGC'd 7.5 Black Cat Mystery #32. I figure if you could print the following at the beginning of every Letter Hacks, it might cut back on you having to respond to the same questions and comments over and over again:

- 1) This is your first time writing a letter to a comic book.
- 2) Kirkman hopes TWD gets made into an HBO mini-series.
- 3) Yes, TWD is consistently incredible.
- 4) Kirkman hates black people. (Bendis loves them.)

And I think that should cover it. Anyway, TWD is great stuff, I think y'all know this by now. A fan,

MRG01

Hey! You were doing really well until number 4! Bendis hates black people more than I do!!*

Robert Kirkman actually doesn't hate black people at all. In fact, I would say he loves them. He loves them all. He is not racist in any way shape or form.*

****Okay, Robert is pretty sure Bendis doesn't hate black people either.**

Kirkman,

Your book is the only book out there that I willingly put myself into further debt. On a college budget this shit isn't cheap.

I must take my hat off to you sir! Every issue, you fucking blow my mind! Even when the douche bag at the store fucking tells me that Lori dies before I read your book you were capable to describe so much that dumb fuck couldn't. Just finished reading issue #49 in the parking lot of my local comic shop, and once again I find my mouth on the floor.

Wait a minute--the guy who sold you your book ruined it for you?! What an asshole. I'd stop going to that store. That's messed up. Who does that?

Congratulations on reaching issue #50! (by the time you read this it should be done on your end.) keep up the great work and I find myself wondering what your going to think of next. Best of luck to you in the future. Keep this book on the shelves and I'll read it to the day you die.

Davis

Man--so many people congratulated us on reaching issue 50 before we actually did it. I'm glad we got the issue out! We would have looked like schmucks!

Dear Kirkman,
I haven't written in a while but I have still been reading. Wow. How the hell did this book make it so far?

Thanks for the vote of confidence! I'm glad you finally decided to write in--I think.

I worried every month that the announcement would finally drop and my monthly zombie goodness would be canceled. 50 issues and still going strong, man. Congrats! Since you moved the crew into the prison, I have been waiting for this issue, the issue where everyone I can't

stand anymore dies. You killed all of them and more! The baby, man! That really hit a note I think, in the series overall. Babies represent the future. You killed the future. With everyone dead person rising and with no new people being born, the world is truly ending. I dig that. It seems we are now watching the final days of the human race. Good times. Ok, questions:

- 1. Are you still actively resisting the urge to improve the zombies? Make them smarter, faster, stronger (I'm thinking Romero here with Bub, Big Daddy, and his character in the Toe Tags comic).

I'm not resisting any urge--I have no desire to do that. That's Romero's thing and it was cool. I'm playing in a zombie world similar to Romero's--but I not outright stealing from the guy. We're going our own way.

- 2. Do you feel that zombies are relevant today? Never mind sales and all that, I mean philosophically. What does the zombie have to say about our reality?

Buddy, I never went to college. They're entertaining and I enjoy doing this book--relevant? Hell if I know. I think so... this world is a very dangerous place again.

- 3. Who are you voting for? Which candidate would make the best zombie?

Look, I'm a left of center kind of guy, but I'm not going to turn this into a political forum. I've finally reached an age where politics are very important to me. I think everyone should be as informed as possible and everyone should vote--but only if they're informed (or if they're blindly voting for my guy). Politics are important--but really, this is just a book about people trying to keep from getting eaten by zombies.

- 4. Was Dr. Logan on to something?

I don't know exactly what you're referring to. Bub kind of proved his theories right, right?

- 5. When are they going to find a helicopter? There must be a helicopter!

There was a helicopter in issue 26!!

I am still on board for another 50 issues. After that, it will likely suck, I mean come on. Only so many babies you can kill. Unless they find that helicopter. Then I am sure they could find more babies. Oh, and Shoot 'Em Up was one of the greatest movies ever. Carl should learn some gun-fu. That would keep me reading past issue 100... It seems THE working formula for a good zombie story goes something like this: Small group of survivors meets up with another in some safehouse. Shelter is besieged as internal conflicts arise, juxtaposed with what is going on outside. Internal conflict leads to breach in defense, zombies pour in, and many die. Few survivors fly off in the distance to assembly repeat scenario ad infinitum. Is this how you see this book continuing? I'd say you could just throw in those aliens to jack it all up, but the movie Undead did that pretty well. While I like the formulaic nature of the zombie story, I wonder how long it will take to get old. Romero decided zombies get smarter. Others write in some cure or reason for the outbreak (I always imagine Jeff Goldbloom running in shouting, "I figured it out!"). I am eagerly awaiting your personal twist.

You haven't let us down yet.

Love,
Chris Pitts

Y'know, when issue 3 or so was out--people were saying "This is good--but I don't see how it could last and remain as good" and here we are--issue 50, and people seem to still like it. Some think the book is better than it's ever been. I know I'm having just as much fun--hell, it seems like I'm writing issue 10, not 56 or whatever. So who's to stay we can't keep it going after 100? Who's to say it won't still be as good? That formula you mentioned won't be the fate of this series, trust me. There's still a lot of cool things planned for this book before we throw the aliens in!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I have two questions for ye.

- 1.) If there is ever a Walking Dead television series that you are in charge of, would you prefer it be Black and White or in Color.

Color. I think it'd look to weird and arty in black and white. What work's for the comic--won't work for a show.

- 2.) You have said you have decided not to reveal a cause for the zombie plague(which I fully support and thank you for). But have you come up with a reason for the plague that you are keeping secret?

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

There is a reason, and as you can see at the end of this issue--I might just have finally decided to reveal it.

And with that--I'll leave you kids so that I can get to work on getting issue 54 out very very soon.

I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Issue 54, kids. I gotta say... it feels good to be in the big numbers... firmly established, past issue fifty and full steam ahead. I still LOVE working on this book as much as I did on the first issue--in fact, infinitely more so. This is what I got into comics to do--to tell long continuing stories over an extremely long run on a series. Good times.

Also... I hope you've noticed we're getting the issues out pretty regularly these days. We plan on that being a continuing trend. Wish us luck.

Capt. Kirkman,

About six months ago I was given the entire Walking Dead series to borrow from a friend of mine and found myself hooked to the gills. Unfortunately as with most things I love, I have to pick it apart.

1. You can't kill everyone and expect people not to lose interest. At the core of any story are the characters, and I don't know if I have the patience to accept and empathize with new ones whenever you get bored. In a movie when everyone dies the movie is over and I don't have to care anymore but this thing just keeps on going. Ugh.

Well, as you can see from this issue... there are a great many characters still alive... and so that shouldn't be too much of a problem, and also, there are some new characters that should grow on you over time. Tyreese wasn't introduced into the book until issue 7, Hershel in issue 10 Michonne in issue 19, The Governor in issue 26... this book is always going to be changing, growing and evolving... but there will never be a time when it's ALL new characters. So don't worry. Honestly, though--I think the evolving cast and the fact that anything can happen in this book is something that makes it so popular. We'll see... so far, sales have only gone UP since I killed "everyone" in issue 48.

2. I hate to say it but you might need to address the problem of a great deal of the characters looking too similar. I know I'm not alone here. Far too many times I found myself confusing one character for another or completely forgetting them altogether. Scars and headbands only work for so long.

I'd argue that the characters do look vastly different from each other now more than ever... and there's only so much you can do in a black and white book about normal people. Rick and Hershel might have looked similar before.... Andrea and Carol might have been hard to tell apart in one or two scenes... but that's not going to be a problem now. Everyone in the book now has a unique look... I'd be hard pressed to find something similar about any of them.

3. Cliff Rathburn is kick ass and has far too little to do with this series. Give him a page in the comic! Just let him draw a zombie like he used to on the back cover, but put it smack dab in the middle incorporated into the story like a jolting little wake up call.

I love Cliff as much as the next guy--but I'm afraid that might be a bit too jarring--it'd take people out of the story.

4. You don't have to explain why the zombies are around, but someone needs to set some ground rules for those of us with bad memories. What kills them, how smart are they, what do we know and what can we learn?

It comes up from time to time... some of that was discussed this issue.

How about some military personnel or something? They could shed some light.

Keep reading... we'll have some answers of some kind as we move forward.

I stopped reading comics for a long time, but you've got me back on them. thanks.

Thanks for your time.
Brad Radcock

Thank YOU for some time. It's good to get letters like this--that make it easy for me to have something to say... without just making fun of you or being mean. Thanks for that.

Dear Robert,

I met you over the Chicago comic-con weekend. It was Friday in the fountain room after your panel that I missed. I was "guy in a red shirt". I had the Raiders hat on and the Raiders tattoo. It was a pleasure meeting you.

I remember you!

Thanks for being cool to a zombie fanboy! While talking to you, I asked if you could kill the twins off. You said "yes!" You even admitted that "they don't really do much do they?". Well sir, I geeked out and looked into it. They have a total of 10 lines in the whole run of the book. (issues 9, 10, 15, 16, 22 and 26). Most of the time all we see them doing is playing. I understand that their presence was important. Their youth and "family" made the group seem like a whole in the beginning of the book. It made Rick's responsibility of a leader important because it wasn't just adults and his family that had to be protected and fed. Later, Chris and Julie get stuck baby-sitting the twins, Carl and Sophia. It allowed you to show us the angst in Chris and Julie because they didn't want to baby sit. The twins also made the loss of Donna seem somewhat important since she was their mother. Also, because of the twins, Allen's downward spiral into hopelessness was easier to understand and enhanced. After Allen finally died, you used the twins as a tool to express how Andrea has matured as a character. Andrea is still in her early 20's (I think). Having her take on the responsibility of the twins has matured her character. I can't possibly see any reason to keep the twins around any more. They have had very few lines in the book. They

make very few appearances (about once per trade). Their deaths could be used to develop Dale and Andrea's relationship more. You already killed off Judith who was much more innocent than the twins are, so you've already crossed that line. Kill them off already. Everyone wins. You won't have to work them in the story. Adlard doesn't have to find a way draw them into the book. We don't have to read about them anymore. It's a win-win-win situation.

Thanks,
Mike Gineman
Ohio

Well, they DON'T do a whole lot in this series... but y'know they ARE little kids. It's not like they're going to be carrying stories anytime soon. That said, I do have plans for them and I'd hate to just kill them off so they don't appear once in every trade and bug you. As you've pointed out in your letter--they've served a whole lot of story elements of this series so far... and they'll continue being just as useful--just you wait.

Congratulations on 50.

I called in sick to work today so I could pick this issue up. Granted, I was also pretty hung-over, but I will still lay claim to the gesture as an example of how much one can actually care about a comic book.

It's very flattering--and I feel your pain. I was on a business trip for my day job before I worked in comics full time and I had no idea where the comic shops were in the town I was in... and the new issue of SAVAGE DRAGON had shipped--so I got the phone book, called a cab and had him take me to a shop in the phone book. An hour or so later... and \$40 more broke--I arrived and bought my comic... and then had to pay another \$40 to get back. So yeah... I paid \$83 for an issue of Savage Dragon back when I was making less than 20K a year... fun times.

The wrap-around cover is so great that it almost makes up for the five recycled pages.

Ian Dennis

Five recycled pages? Did you get a misprinted copy?

Dear Robert:

Issue 50 = uh-mazing. Seriously, it's very good. The last few months, I haven't even made it back to my house before I had to stop and find out what's happening with everybody in TWD. I read #48 in the parking lot of a Lowe's and no one was there to hug me when it was over.

So, my friend from Kentucky says that nobody who actually lives in Kentucky likes My Morning Jacket. Is that true?

Well... I don't even know what "My Morning Jacket" is. A movie? A band? I have NO CLUE.

Do your friends and neighbors like TWD and/or Invincible? Do people just dislike the successful people from their hometown/state? Down here in Tennessee, we've got Eric Powell, but not nearly enough people appreciate him, from what I can tell. So what's your experience with people who live in your area? Is it weird when your friend or relative or someone you're acquainted with reads and likes something you've done? Or dislikes it? Or maybe they know where you got all your ideas and they're not impressed. Like, your aunt Lori was pissed when she heard about issue 48, but uncle Rick just thought it was kinda funny. And Tyreese was more popular than you in high school. Oh, I'm on to you.

Van Barnett

My father's name is Carl, but aside from that... there's next to nothing taken from my actual life for this book... aside from the setting of the first few issues. I grew up in Cynthiana, Kentucky (as did Tony Moore).

I have friends who read my work... as far as I know most of them like it... but I try to make sure it's clear that they don't HAVE to like my work. I mean, I don't care how many mattresses my friend sells at his job or how good of a factory worker someone is. This is, after all, just a job. Liking the work I do has nothing to do with friendship. So yeah...

Most local people are very friendly and supportive. They let me think they're interested in my stories and most of them are all around nice people... then again, I do technically live in the South.

All right, Kirkman.

I hate and love you at the same time. I hate to write you this letter and I hate to say the same damn thing I've ready in the past several letter hacks, but I'm going to say it anyway: This is indeed my first time writing into any comic in my whole life.

Suuuuuuure.

First up is the love. I haven't read comics in several years but your comic sucked me back in. I love it, more than any comic I've ever read. I'm a horror nut at heart and zombies have always been my favorite. Just something about the end of the world has always appealed to me, on a fantasy level only, of course. The reality is the end of the world would suck and I probably wouldn't make it a week. But I love you because you've given us such great stories and great characters and in a genre that I love. More importantly, my 11 year old son, who I'm slowly nurturing into a full blown horror nut (he's only up to Monster Squad so far, but he's about ready for some Freddy, don't ya think?), is also in love with your comic. It's a regular routine for us now. Each time we talk he asks me when the next Walking Dead is coming out. I tell him I don't know, since you can't get it down to a regular monthly cycle (that's just a preview to the hate, man). But finally the release date will appear on the Image forum and I give him the heads up - next Wednesday it's out! He's excited, I'm excited. We get it, read it, discuss it, and begin the wait again.

Okay, so now it's time for the hate. Why can't you just release the damn thing once a month like you are supposed to? I've read your bit about how if you run the math on how long the comic has been out, you are nearly at the 12 issues a year. Yeah, you throw "nearly" in there, which prevents me from really ripping into you, but I'm going to do it anyway. I just googled the release date for issue #1; it was October 2003. So this October 2008 is going to be the five year anniversary, right? Where the hell is issue #60? Issue #50 came out on July 2nd and if I were a betting man, I suspect we might be at issue #53 by October. That's seven issues behind, man. Over a half year. I just can't accept that, so get with the program and start pumping these suckers out! Oh, but don't sacrifice quality or anything like that. I still want top quality.

This issue will be in stores in October 2008... so that's 54 issues in FIVE years. That's 11 issues a year... except for one year where we shipped 10. That's not so bad. Compare us to most other comics... and you'll see there aren't an awful lot of comics that get 12 issues out in a year. Also... let's give Charlie Adlard some credit here. What other artist produced 48 comics in four and a half years? Really... point them out... you'll get what... three guys? THREE. Charlie is THE MAN. He's busting his ass on this series and don't a damn fine job on it. He's drawing much more issues a year than most everyone.

That said... we'll be shipping 12 issues in 2009. It's guaranteed, the press release should have gone out by now. We're good to go. It's going to be awesome.

And while we are on the hate bit, why are the issues so damn short? My son and I read them and are like: That's it? That two minute read is all we get? Seriously, is that the standard length for a comic these days? It just seems like Wolf-Man is longer. Hopefully I'm wrong on that. I think the

fact that I read all the hardcovers spoiled me, too.

The Walking Dead is actually LONGER than Wolf-Man. You get two extra pages in The Walking Dead. Sometimes we do quieter issues... do yourself a favor and look at the art. That's the whole point with a comic. Blazing over the silent panels or tearing through a comic with less dialogue would be like fast forwarding through the silent parts of a movie... you'd miss something. I promise the issues would be far more rewarding if you take your time. Also, the recent issues with just Rick and Carl were largely silent... Carl didn't have anyone to talk to for a while there.

In closing, let me state that I'm coming to the Baltimore comic con and plan to get you to sign some stuff for me and my son. I expect you to take some pictures with us, too! Because even though I hate you, I love you, too, man. Thanks for everything.

Dave

By the time this sees print--I will have already met you and done this. Isn't that NEAT?

P.S. I reviewed your comic on my web site - horror DVDs.com. If you happen to print this and let me plug my site in the best comic I've ever read, all will be forgiven. The choice is yours, dude.

Done.

P.P.S. You're an asshole for making me think Rick was a zombie. The full pager clinched it for me, along with the fact you are heartless son-of-bitch to the characters that I've grown to love.

Fooled you!

Dear Kirkman.

No request. just one demand.

42 page issue.

Thank you the books been great lately.

Ken Wilson

Let's see if I can get the 22 page issues coming out on time first.

Dear Omnipotent Kirk One,

I have been reading comics for a relatively short time (three years) but your work is the first from any of the humanities that has reduced me to screaming profanities at a piece of paper. You, in a word, Kick-Ass. I used a hyphen so that is one word. Because I said so. I have been reading this book since I picked up the first hardcover on a whim so that I could score free shipping from an Internet book store. I read the entire thing in one night, while at work. I now have a personal rule NOT to read TWD while at work since I work on a psychiatric ward and screaming profanities at inanimate objects during the middle of night is frowned upon. Needless to say, the next day I went to my local comic shop and ordered all of the trades, grabbed the singles in stock, and caught up with the story at issue 48. Damn. You have just surpassed Joss Whedon as my biggest Love/Hate man crush.

Hate? Where's the hate?

Anyway, numbered questions.

1) Do you yourself know what caused the zombie plague or are you in the dark as much as the rest of us?

I have ideas... but it's nothing set in stone because I never plan on writing it. So yes... I do know... kind of.

2) In the letters column for issue 50 you said "I would never kill a real person..." and then in another letter you said "trust me, if there's a hell... all the homeless people I've murdered will get me in there way faster than any story I've written in this series." While I understand the attempt at jocularly, do you, Robert Kirkman, not consider the homeless "real" people?

I do not.*

***This is another attempt at jocularly.**

3) What is wrong with you? Read World War Z. It actually gave me nightmares (in the single meaning of the plural)

I discussed this with Max Brooks briefly at Comic-Con a year ago or so. I can't read World War Z for fear I'll be influenced by it. Same reason I haven't read The Zombie Survival guide (I do own both). I told Max this and he admitted that he didn't read The Walking Dead until AFTER he'd finished World War Z for the same reason. The problem is... if all goes well, The Walking Dead will never end... so I'm probably going to read World War Z soon. I'm really looking forward to it.

Your loyal reader until the zombie apocalypse claims us all,

James Kephart II

P.S. I find the use of post script in an electronic medium extremely hilarious.

And yet so many people do it.

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm a recent convert to WALKING DEAD fandom. Being a big Romero fan, once I got wind of the WALKING DEAD (which sounds gross) I had to pick up all the trades and back issues, which I read in a couple of glorious sittings. I was sad to see Tyreese go, thought Axel could've been kept around a little longer and developed more (as it was kind of interesting that they had a jailbird with them), and I look forward to the surviving cast getting back together again. I know you like to kill all the characters, but can ya have some fuckin' mercy on Dale and Andrea for a little while longer? I like those two.

They're safe! See--they're safe--for now.

Since I've been reading back issues and the like, Issue 50 was the first one I've had to wait for. It was too damn short! Now, alas, I'm stuck waiting for #51...

-- Greg Wierenga

P.S.: My girlfriend Amanda and I just got engaged! She doesn't like zombies for some reason, but wish her a congrats just the same. :)

Congrats!

And with that... another issue of The Walking Dead is in the can. Keep an eye out for issue 55 very soon. I'll see you there!

-Robert Kirkman

Kirkman,

Can you dump Letter Hacks and just give us more Walking Dead?
I can't read that much after your killer book!

Thanks,

Omar

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
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RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

So what is this... issue... uh... 56? Right? Sorry, I'm starting to lose track of the numbering.

Welcome aboard, I hope you guys and gals dug the issue. We're having a lot of fun here with the series and we're all very excited about the direction the book is taking, so I hope it's coming through in the reading.

We're still playing catch-up a bit, trying to make sure these issues ship on time so you're going to have to put up with the shorter-than-usual letters columns a little bit longer.

It's not that big a deal right? I mean, Andrew Shaw's letters are still getting printed.

Speaking of which...

Dear Kirk-the-Man,

You had me. You really had me! I thought for sure that this series was pretty much done with, and that the Rick-and-Carl-Connection (that's a wrestling thing; you wouldn't understand) would roam the open plains together forever!! It was BOOOO-ring--karaoke, even! But then, to borrow a line from a fellow critic: Magic! The characters, old and new, started piling up again!! And now we're on the precipice of something really big!! I can feel it. I agree with scientist-guy's assessment that Washington D.C. is the place to be... all those secret underground bunkers and stuff! And what's more, if he knows what caused the plague, well, that's--that's something too, right!? But what is Dale afraid of if he isn't afraid of the Dead? BEING dead? The Guv'nors people? Yeah, I liked this issue pretty well, I surmise. More issues like this--please! And it's not that I haven't been buying issues of INVINCIBLE--they just haven't been coming in!!

By the way, who was the Original pencil artist on TWD? I've been racking my brains (I have so many) but just can't seem to remember. And when did Charlie Adlard start on the book? I know he did Thunderbolts at one time, right?

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Wow Andrew, just... wow. I think that's the first time you've seemed to actually enjoy and issue of my work. This is a proud moment for me. Really. Very proud.

To answer your question, Tony Moore was the original artist on The Walking Dead. He drew issues one through six--and then Charlie came on with issue seven and has been here ever since. Charlie did do a Thunderbolts annual, at least--as well as countless other comics. Charlie has drawn many many comic books in his long career because he is very old.

Kirkman,

Can the zombies go up stairs?

Regards,
Jeremy Woods,
New Zealand.

Not usually--it's decided on a case by case basis... I'm sure there's a zombie out there who could... but not very well. Good question. Hey--to reference this series--was it issue 8? Rick opens the door to the basement of that house--and zombies are waiting at the top of the stairs and rush him! Look at me remembering my own books. So based on that scene--yeah, zombies can go up stairs... but it probably took them a while.

Kirkman of Action,

This is the week! THE WALKING DEAD finally caught up with INVINCIBLE. Congratulations, sir.

Are you congratulating me on one of my books having a slightly poorer shipping schedule than the other? Sheesh! Invincible should catch up again very soon. By the end of the year the books should be comfortably one issue away from each other.

To me, it means synchronicity. You've kept these books on a tight schedule through an artist change, your varied work at Marvel, and you still make time for letters. That's a success that the Big 2 have never achieved. I'll be with BRIT if it only comes out once a year...so what does keeping your books on schedule mean to you?

Well, you're one of those fine people I adore, who have noticed that up until now--the books have been on a pretty good schedule already--so thanks for that. Even when compared to a lot of Marvel and DC books, my Image titles do ship frequently--so there.

BUT, moving forward, I plan on hitting monthly dates like clockwork. I'm hoping this will show my commitment to the titles and make the titles that much more accessible to new readers. While the books I'm currently writing are doing very well... I would never turn away new readers--we could always be selling more.

It's also the first month where my Image, Dark Horse, and independent titles outnumber my Marvel purchases. We're in tight financial times and Marvel keeps putting out more and more crap \$3.99 books. I think it's important to leave budget for trying new stuff, because I read comics as a creative outlet. The same characters and stories recycled over and over is not creative. So needless to say, I think your "manifesto" about driving the industry towards creator-owned work is timely and bold. The industry and the graphic storytelling medium as a whole will be better for it. What would you say is the biggest challenge to moving in that direction?

Exclusive contracts are a big problem. It kept me from doing more creator-owned stuff when I was under contract... and contracts are staggered, so that no one is coming out of their contract at the same time... so there's little chance for a group like the original Image Seven to organize. There will be baby steps made from time to time--and I hope to soon be working in an industry where the top talent, as a whole, is creating new things rather than just fueling

a corporate entity that’s milking 60 year old characters. Characters that I love--so don’t get me wrong... but I see no reason there can’t be at least a dozen or two top creators actually... y’know, creating stuff on a regular basis.

Anyway, sorry I missed you at the Baltimore Con but my wife is happy that I spent the weekend with her and consequently she still enjoys hearing my recaps of THE WALKING DEAD. Rock on, sir!

Brian Hans

Well, I’m glad your wife is happy! I, on the other hand, was left in the lurch. I was looking forward to seeing you. Jerk.

Dear Kirkman,

Just finished reading issue #53 and I must say it was a good one. I’m not the biggest fan of seeing the cause of a zombie epidemic revealed as the answer tends to be very similar in all zombie stories save a few and is getting very redundant. So I must say that I am hoping that scientist guy bites it at the beginning of the next issue before the big reveal (Now watch the irony unfold as he ends up being one of my favorite characters!). However, if said scientist survives to reveal the cause of the plague, I’m sure you will handle it well. This book has been nothing but great so far and I see it staying that way.

May the dead keep walking,
Adam Davis

Just keep reading. While I’m sure you can tell by now that Eugene didn’t die at the opening of issue 54--he hasn’t exactly gotten around to spilling the beans about the cause of this zombie epidemic. So there’s still some wiggle room there. Also--when he DOES finally give the reason--who knows if he’ll be right. Eh? Eh?

Hey Mr. K-

1st time writer to you, long time reader of you. You’re my favorite comic writer.

I had some questions for you-

1- Are we ever going to learn more about Glenn’s falling out with his parents? (mentioned early on in series)

Eventually, I’m sure. No plans now.

2- Are you Bruce Brown, the writer of BRIT and if so, why?

I’m really NOT Bruce Brown. I don’t know why people would even think I am.

3- If not, who is Bruce Brown?

Bruce is an all around good guy and talented writer who I met while I was running my publishing company, Funk-O-Tron. He wrote Chaser’s Moon in an anthology called “Inkpunks” and that story later continued in back-ups of my title “Battle Pope: Wrath of God.” He’s done other stuff--and we kept in touch since then. He did write that stuff under the pen name “Kimo” but I assure you’re--they’re the same guy and I was never writing as either of them.

4- What are your thoughts, if any, on Marvel’s pricing policy: \$2.99 direct market, \$3.99 newsstand?

I think it’s a necessity for the newsstand market. If a newsstand guy can make more profits off a pack of gum or a magazine then why should they carry comics? Comics are sold for more on the newsstand to justify them occupying the shelf space. At least--that’s what I’ve been told. Just be lucky you know they’re cheaper in comic shops.

5- Do you think Marvel is testing the comic market to see if a price hike would hurt comic sales?

I have no idea... seems likely but I really don’t know.

6- Is there a price hike coming to your comics?

With the economy in the state it is--I’m thinking NO... but I will say this. When I started reading comics, or rather, when I started shopping at a comic store. BONE was \$2.95... and Image titles were \$2.50... and Marvel and DC books were \$1.95 and maybe even \$1.75 on some titles.

As \$2.95 became the standard price for an independent comic--Marvel eventually went to \$2.25... and then \$2.50... and then \$2.95... and then \$2.99.

Independent comics have gone to \$2.99... and some smaller publisher charge \$3.99... which a lot of people say is too expensive. But you see, Marvel & DC have advertising and newsstand and subscription revenue streams that aren’t there for independent books... and they, on average, sell far more than an independent book... they should NEVER be the same price.

Now Mavel is selling more and more standard length comics at \$3.99... a dollar MORE that most independent books. That’s crazy. That’s just not right, frankly... but y’know what--they’re smart for selling the books for whatever you’ll pay for them.

I will say... if they do eventually bring all their titles to \$3.99... holy SHIT. What happened to \$3.25... or \$3.50... or \$3.75? I mean... that’s a HUGE jump. I hope it doesn’t cripple the entire comics industry.

Meanwhile... all my titles will remain at a nice \$2.99 for at least a little while longer.

That’s all--THANX FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT and KEEP IT UP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PLORD4EVER

Thanks for writing.

Kirkman,

Okay. I’m nervous as hell now. Last page of #53 “And I know exactly what caused this mess.” Part of me thinks this could be great. And then another part thinks this could cause THE WALKING DEAD to come crashing down.

It’s like you people are waiting, hoping, expecting this book to jump the shark at any minute! Cut me some slack here guys!

I have seen other books that try to explain where the zombies come from. Sometimes it works (a biological plague got loose, the odd comet came too close to Earth and so on).

And other times not so well (it came from PENGUINS... Penguins I tell you! We’re all doomed!).

I have faith in you and this book. If you’re going to reveal how the dead have come back I am sure it will be a good explanation... Or at least I hope it will be.

Peace
Eric L. Busby

Continue having faith, please. I won’t let you down... or at least--I’ll try really goddamn hard not to.

Okay, another issue down... sweet. I’ll see you all back here very soon.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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This was a tough one. No two ways about it... sometimes writing this comic is hard. Just the panel where Carl's pants are being pulled off—that was really unsettling. I knew it was going to happen, I had it plotted out—but putting it on the screen in my script, well... I cringed a little.

In the script, I felt compelled to assure Charlie that the man trying to rape Carl wouldn't succeed.

Not really sure what point I'm trying to make here... other than there are definitely parts of this comic that Charlie and I do not produce with GLEE.

Speaking of Charlie... last issue was his FIFTIETH issue. That's right, Charlie's been on this sucker for FIFTY issues. That's a heck of a milestone. Congrats, my man—sorry I forgot to mention it last issue. Eventually, I'll have to have someone come in and write six issues so that I can let you catch up.

Speaking of catching up... how about a pat on the back. We've been knocking these issues out in rapid succession, haven't we?

Letters? Letters.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you and congratulations! Like your characters, I find myself very pleased when they/you do good and good in turn is done to them/you. Your new status at Image is well deserved. I can honestly say that you are the jewel in their crown, making the establishment seem all that more friendly.

I write this not to be printed, but to say that you are the nicest creator I have ever met at a convention. I didn't know what to say to you – I was awestruck, as many are when confronted by one of their heroes. You graciously took my omnibus, signed it, then took it to Mr. Adlard to solicit a sketch on my behalf.

I love making Charlie work... it really had nothing to do with you.

There is nothing I can say about The Walking Dead that hasn't been said before; it has elicited the whole range (from reverence to disgust) of emotions that I am capable of experiencing. It works on so many levels.

One question:

There was a panel when the penitentiary was being locked down as the conflict was reaching a crescendo, and in the panel it showed (sorry for my shoddy memory with some of the character's names) the

overweight, long haired ex-con calmly walking in the upper level, in the opposite direction—where was he going? Was he going to open the gates...? While it did not amount to anything plot-wise, it scared the bejeezus out of me! Was that intentional, or was my mind making much of nothing? It just attests to the heightened awareness obtained while being engrossed in the world of TWD or in the trying times in life. But was it intentional? It works if it was or wasn't – that is why I love your books that much.

Regards,
Robert

The only panel I could find that matched your description... is one where Axel is on the tower keeping watch. He's not walking—just standing there—keeping an eye on the horizon for The Governor and his men.

P.S. Look for me at a future con, with the 2nd Omnibus volume!

Will do!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Terrifying, horrible, grizzly, brutal...awesome!

The last time I wrote to a letters column was to Bernie Wrightson and the original Swamp Thing! As mentioned by others, I can't pull out of the parking lot before finishing the latest The Walking Dead release!

I look forward to TWD becoming an ongoing TV series, similar to Lost.

You and me both, pal!

I also enjoy tantalizing unanswered questions like: Why does it seem like the time it takes for conversion into zombies vary? Why does conversion appear to be happening more rapidly as time goes by?

Sometimes it's rapid, sometimes it's not... it depends on how the person dies, how quickly, how weak they are when they die... there's a method to it, I swear.

Would it be possible (or make any sense) to devote an issue to the perspective of a newly converted individual into the zombies? What is their perception of the world and of the living? What's going on in their brain? Is there anything left, any sense of anything (even Sophia said they looked sad)? There has to be something there – even a mosquito has a perspective of the world, even though its overt behavior is dominated by bloodlust.

People ask for this a lot... but I think it would be a pretty lame issue... it'd be completely silent—and wouldn't really have much of a point. Zombies are mindless... they don't have an inner monologue or anything.

Could the zombies be more than reanimated, mindless, rotting corpses, which logically would eventually "run out of gas" with decomposition? Could there be more to this transformation than meets the eyes of the living? Is the preoccupation with feeding and cannibalism a means to an end? Could there be ongoing metamorphosis leading to, god forbid, resurrection?

No... there couldn't be. This book just isn't about the zombies. Don't expect any huge revelations or changes in their behavior... nothing huge I mean... we'll learn a little bit more about them as the series progresses—but none of them are going to sprout wings or grow to fifty feet tall.

Thanks for the series. The story, the characters, the art, and the cliffhangers are perfect and priceless! It doesn't get any better than this!

Sincerely,
Mark

Thanks for reading.

Mr Kirkman:

The Walking Dead is great storytelling...better than most novels. It's literature, with lots of pictures (or literature partially via pictures...or something). And those poor characters...you're so good at putting them through hardship...it's so unfair!

I just got into comics recently (about a year ago)...I'm a manic novel-reader, but now I'm finding that comic books are an amazing medium for storytelling. I DID read some comics as a kid (Ninja Turtles in elementary school and Jhonen Vasquez's stuff just after high-school (I saw Vasquez as an anomaly, not as a regular comics-book artist, so it didn't inspire me to look for other comics)) but it wasn't until I started reading the Madman series and Darkhorse's Conan series that I fell in love with the art and stories of the comics world (Conan is another long tale with more depth than might be expected...just like TWD!). Then I started reading everything Grendel-related, Stephen King's Dark Tower comics (Why'd he pick Marvel? Oh well, they're doing a great job!), Spawn, random graphic novels...and now the soul-wrenching, heart-breaking, brain-boggling drug that is The Walking Dead. I borrowed all 53 issues from a friend who urgently pushed them on me. Just before writing this I read #38-53 in one sitting (and I almost threw up several times... but I kept reading out of what I assume must be masochism...), but now I've got to wait a whole month between each issue! I want them all now! Write them all now!

Anyway, the purpose of the letter is to thank you for being one of the people who make comics a great medium. By doing good work you'll inspire good work, and it's great that you'll be more influential with Image now, and I'm sure you'll find some great new talents to keep us happy. My compliments to Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn as well, who bring your stories to life. This is all good for comics, and good for art in general.

Lemme ask a few quick questions:

1) Grendel is a viciously independent comic...are you a fan? (You should get Matt Wagner to work for Image!)

Big fan of Grendel and a huge fan of Matt Wagner

in general. Matt's done some work here in the past, his MAGE series has found a home here—I hope he'll continue it soon.

2) Are you a Stephen King fan? I bet he's a you-fan.

I wouldn't be so sure. I just recently started reading Stephen King... my dad was always a huge fan. I'm really enjoying it so far.

3) The Spider-Man movies were an unacceptable travesty! (It's not a question and it has nothing to do with you, but I repeat that line thrice a day...Spider-Man is so cool, and those movies sucked so much! Peter Parker is a hyper-smart smart-aleck nerd, not a dopey crybaby like in the film. Un-redeemable!)

Eh... the first two were awesome. I could arm-chair quarterback the shit out of the third movie but it's still at least watchable... and the action is cool. I love me some Sam Raimi... I enjoy all his movies.

4) Any chance Image will be taking on any sci-fi endeavors (aside from Red Mass for Mars, which is gonna be too short!)? Comic sci-fi is always (always!!!!) cheesy cyber-punk...but it has the potential to equal Schild's Ladder and The Inverted World... sci-fi offers such storylines, such visuals, and it's such an open-ended genre...can you make it happen? Read The Inverted World by Christopher Priest (he wrote the book that The Prestige was based on) and you'll see that the comic world has employed criminal neglect in the sci-fi field. OR can you at least suggest a good sci-fi comic, if one exists?

I'm developing a few sci-fi series, but I'm uncertain when they'll see the light of day. I'm a big fan of the genre. Off to top of my head—I really can't think of any really good sci-fi comics... but I'm sure they're just slipping my mind.

So, keep up the good work. And even though I borrowed all the current comics for free, I will be buying each new issue, AND I have a brother who's getting some TWD collections/Omnibuses (omnibi?) for Christmas.

As long as we're getting your money NOW... all is forgiven.

I can't wait for the "all out action" in #54...bullets and zombie-blood!

And Rick and Michonne need to take over a castle! That would be the perfect anti-zombie stronghold.

OK bye.
Matt Payne

A castle, hmmmmm? There aren't a lot of those in The United States.

Dear "Babykiller" Kirkman,

Despite your dire warnings, it always felt like Rick might be the one character who was "safe" – I mean, he's been our connection to the story from the start. But at this point, with everything you've taken from him, killing him off would almost be a mercy. Just don't turn him into a goddamn zombie.

As much as I missed the letters, it was good to read the interviews in the last few issues. I had heard the jokes about bringing aliens into the storyline, but never knew it was a prank you had pulled in your story pitch. Funny! Anyhoo, way back when, you issued a call for zombie movie suggestions. I don't recall if any of these have been mentioned:

Braindead (or Dead Alive). How in the world did Peter Jackson get to make The Frighteners, let alone the Lord of the Rings trilogy? I suppose Dead Alive is a fun gory movie—we're talking ridiculous, way, way over-the-top gore – but as a zombie movie it's just silly.

Dead and Deader. (Starring TV's superman, Dean Cain!) It's got some hot chick! And a black comic-relief sidekick! Yeah, this one's also just silly.

Fido. Now this is a brilliant zombie movie...funny, gory, and yet charmingly sweet. (A description I didn't think I'd ever use outside of Shaun of the Dead.) I'm not spoiling anything here – Set in a 1950s-ish America, the opening "newsreel" sequence reveals that a zombie plague erupted, but was contained by the government. Zombies now wear electric collars and are used for menial labor. The movie offers a truly original take on the genre, which you don't often see. And there's some nice social commentary/satire if you want to pay attention to it. Stars Carrie-Anne Moss, Tim Blake Nelson, Billy Connelly, and Dylan Baker. Buy it. Right now.

Dexter Midnight

Thanks for the suggestions, man. I think I might go out and get Fido right now.

Mr. Kirkman,

There seems to be a bit of complaints about the length of the issues, though while I wouldn't mind a longer read, I love that each one still moves the story along while leaving you at a point in which you're dying to pick up the next issue. Honestly, that's how a comic book should read, especially one of this nature. That said, you've stated many times you want The Walking Dead to go on forever, so I assume this Washington business isn't going to end well? I suppose that's a given. Though will they even hint at what that "classified information" is?

Eventually, yes.

Also, I'm glad to see your response that Andrea and Dale are safe for the moment, though what about Michonne? She seems to get a bit of hate from the fans, at least people I've talked to, though she's actually come to be one of my favorites. So what are the chances of her making it for a bit longer? Are they going to actually reach Washington? That thing about the generator going out almost seems like a "that's what they think" moment. Either way, can't wait for the next issue.

Asia Sorenson

There's a series of questions I can't really answer without giving things away. Did I say Andrea and Dale are safe for a while? Oops.

Dear Robert,

Just finished issue #54. Abraham kicks ass! It's cool you have a soldier in the group. When are you going to kill him? Seriously, try to keep him around for a while. At least five or six more issues.

I'll do my best... no promises.

Dear Charlie,

I don't understand why people can't tell the characters apart. They all look different to me. You do a great job and I enjoy your art.

(I'll answer for Charlie) Thanks, old boy. Top of the morning to you. Cheers! Pip pip! (Charlie is British).

Dear Robert (again),

I was at Zombie Con in North Carolina a couple of weeks ago and I turned some people onto The Walking Dead. I would've thought if you were at a show called Zombie Con you would've already been reading it, but whatever. Anyway, thanks for writing this book.

Until Abraham starts carrying a trash can lid around as a shield and calling Carl "Bucky," Make Mine Kirkman.

Rob Shelor

So... until next issue then?

Kirkman-

Thanks for printing my previous letters. To be included in the pages of issue 50 was really cool, I even nerded out and bought both covers.

YAY!

Just a quick question this time: For those of us who have faithfully read every Letter Hacks since early issues (#19 in my case) how are we supposed to feel suspense at this new plot line? You've stated on multiple occasions that you don't plan on revealing the cause of the zombie outbreak, so...we already know this new "scientist" character isn't going to be right, or will never get the chance to prove his theory etc...Unless you've lied to us all this time?! Or perhaps you're writing this with the folks who only buy the trades in mind?

Maybe I was saying that to throw you off—or maybe that's the LEAST important part of the upcoming storyline... either way, you shouldn't be disappointed.

Don't get me wrong, I'm excited about both the new characters, and Dale, Andrea, and the rest hitting the road again, I'm just a little disappointed in their reasons for hitting the road.

The reason is going to Washington... that should be at least somewhat exciting.

That small complaint/question aside, I really like how you're handling Rick's transition from being the "leader," but Abraham is no Tyreese. I hope you let Dale and Andrea "lead" for awhile...though I sense that there might be conflict in the future between Dale and Abraham over Andrea...

It's great to still be so excited about where this story, and Invincible are going! Not an easy thing to accomplish for over fifty issues I'm sure.

Take care,
Adam Mitchell

I'm just thankful you guys are all still interested at all. I feel very lucky to still be able to do all my books.

Okay... another issue down. I'll see you back here next month for issue 58... GUARANTEED!

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to issue 58 of The Walking Dead. My god, it seems like only yesterday I was writing issue 50 and now we're already reaching issue 60. Heck, it's all just flying by.

Well, let's do some letter answering, shall we?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thanks for another great issue (55). Just when I thought we were going to get 50 issues free of death to balance out the first 50, wham-o! The suicide fairy strikes again. I hope this time her visit is brief. Not to make light of the tragedy, mind you. My condolences to THE WALKING DEAD gang. While suicide is used by some to escape life's tragedies, I imagine it won't be as kind to the survivors.

I pay you this simple yet powerful compliment: Once again you have made me wonder what is going to happen next. Although judging from your comment in the previous letter column that we'll never find out what caused the zombies, I assume the slightly overweight, slightly too curious, slightly creepy government scientist is next in line to eat it.

You never know...

A couple questions/humble demands:

1. Can you please print Lori's phone number? I, like Rick, have some questions about the afterlife. I'd be willing to pay at least 15 cents a minute for such a call.

I'll see what I can do.

2. Can you please have a character with contact lenses? Please. No matter how many post-apocalyptic scenarios I've checked out, I've never seen one where someone wears contacts and has to deal with scrounging up refills, getting solution, keeping them clean, and using an old pair of glasses that constantly slides down the nose with slightest bit of nose sweats. Every time I see a disaster situation played out I always ask myself what I would do about my contacts. I want to see a character go through this dilemma so I'll know how to deal.

It's not a bad idea, really... and it's not like I haven't thought of this kind of thing before. The hunt for toothpaste, etc. The problem is the more you dwell on the mundane the more tedious the book could get... and once you crack that egg open—it starts to become obvious how much other stuff I'm ignoring. I mean there are so many little things it's assumed that they have without ever showing where they get them.

Tampons anyone?

I think some things are better left unsaid. Also, the contact issue ends with someone just using glasses... or being blind. You couldn't find new contacts in the correct prescription—it would be impossible. Solution alone would be hard to keep stocked.

I know the nuance of living in this world and the minutia of life is a large driving force of what makes this comic interesting—but y'know, gotta walk a fine line there, gotta keep things interesting.

3. Can the gang hide out in an abandoned Chuck E. Cheese? I bet they'd have a blast.

Those animatronic animal things would be totally creepy.

4. Do they have enough toilet paper?

Man... you just don't stop. Toilet paper was actually mentioned a couple times in the first few issues. I try not to dwell. Now you've got me thinking about doing "the most boring episode of The Walking Dead yet!" Start with Rick taking a dump in the woods, end with him going to sleep... hmmm. Maybe we'll see how you like that.

5. What year is the story currently in? Have they already seen how Lost ends? If not, I can take all the other stuff that they've been through, but that's a little cruel.

It's set in modern times... but the book started in 2003 and only a year has passed in the book. But that doesn't mean it's 2004 in the book... maybe it's 2009... who knows... who really cares. I don't want to be specific.

6. Please endorse me.

What the hell does this mean? Are you running for office?

7. How come we haven't seen a Waffle House yet? Bert's Chili is great!

Never had Bert's Chili... I'm an all-star special man myself.

Also, I noticed the issue of lateness keeps being addressed. Maybe I'm living in a time warp, but it feels to me like the issues have been coming out every other week. If they were to come out any faster I'd have adjust my budget and drop Superman and Batman versus Vampires and Werewolves or Spider-Man: European Vacation.

Have a great holiday!
Eddie

Eh, the book was never really that late to begin with. Sporadic maybe sure, but in the end we put out a lot of issues. Now though, I'm trying to get an issue out every month—like clockwork. I think before people complained simply because they were sick of waiting for the book... now they'll have nothing to complain about.

Hi Gentlemen,

This one's for Charlie. I read 40-50 comics per month, and have been doing so for 20+ years. I'm that guy. I've read THE WALKING DEAD since issue #1 hit the stands, and have been following all of your books for years, Mr. Kirkman. But I just put down THE WALKING DEAD #55, and I have to tell Charlie Adlard, after 48(?) beautifully drawn issues, that I think he's finally, and beautifully outdone himself. The book is a clinic in storytelling, and probably could have no dialogue at all (no offense Robert), and be utterly easy to understand from panel-to-panel, and page-to-page. This is one of the finest issues of the book, if not the very best, because it does everything the book as a whole does so well: sets the tone for the story from the outset, gives us further insight into the psychological progression and sadness that increasingly permeates the book, and shows us why the world was, is, and will always be so frightening, even when there are no zombies at all. Charlie Adlard's beautiful linework, exquisite panel choices, perfect use of shadow and darkness, and complete control and nuance of facial features make this story work on every level (Mr. Rathburn's gray tones are especially noticeable and sharp as well). Look at the beautiful rendering of the treetops at night, or the panel-by-panel progression of Rick's face while on the phone with the entirety of his own loss. It's about as good as the medium gets. And this issue is why comics is a place for unique storytelling all its own. Here's to your much deserved Eisner, Mr. Adlard. I like you too, Robert, and the rest of the gang. This book's a rare pleasure for its honesty, and all that the word entails.

My very best,
Chris Martin

I'm in complete agreement on the matter of Charlie's immense talent. He's one super-talented dude. I hope to continue working with Charlie for years and years to come. I would send him this letter but it's late and this issue needs to go to print. I know Charlie skims these letters columns for his name (and reads little else...) so I know he'll see this.

Hello Mr. Kirkman!

I'm a relatively new comics reader of about 2 years (I'm 27) and an even newer reader of TWD. I'd never read a single piece of zombie literature in my life up until when I picked up the Vol. 1 TPB on a whim about 2 weeks ago. I then proceeded to devour the remaining 7 TPBs within a week's time with the same level of insatiable, zombie-crazed appetite as the creatures in your story. I am now reduced to waiting for a month between issues like the rest of the herd. :(I found myself empathizing with the flesh-starved, exhausted zombie that the travelers discovered in issue #55. I simply cannot get enough now!

I'm glad to hear that the issues will ship out regularly, which is such a nice treat in this day and age. Thanks a bunch for all your hard work and effort. Issue #55 was one of your best single issues to date. That ending was a doozy! I look forward to feeding again next month with #56 ...

Do you foresee more religious overtones entering the book at any point with any of the characters? After all, it is only a matter of time before a pair of zombie Mormon missionaries come by to "convert" Rick and the others ...

-Chitty

Religion will always play a role of some kind in the book—it will take a somewhat more front and center role starting very soon... for at least some time. Look for it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'd like to start by saying that THE WALKING DEAD is the best comic I've ever read. It was also the book that introduced me to the other great series that you write. Lately, I've been going to the comic shop and just buying anything with your name on it. Where do you find the time to put out all these comics? Anyway, on to the questions...

1) On the last page of issue #55, it shows that Maggie apparently hangs herself. When I turn a couple pages to check out the preview for next month's issue, there's Maggie (among others) on the cover!!!! This confused the hell outta me until I did some research (ok so all I did was go to www.image.com) and found out that issue 56 is just gonna be some kind of retrospective type deal. I need to know what happens next. WTF BOB?!?

Well, you know now that Maggie in fact, didn't die. Sorry for the confusion.

2) What is the purpose of the zombie that was too weak to move in 55? Are you using it to show that the zombies can only "survive" for a few months as undead and that the first people that turned are starting to die off? Are our heroes going to find some new way to fend them off? Please tell me that this doesn't signify the beginning of the end (of the series).

This series is not ending any time soon. Don't worry. The zombie in issue 55 was just a small hint as to the nature of the zombies existence and will lead to more eventually. Stay tuned.

3) Being a huge fan of INVINCIBLE, I was excited to hear about you and Cory Walker working together again on the Destroyer book. My question is, if you are a partner at Image now, why are you putting that book out under Marvel? *(Here's a good opportunity to talk about how great I am. -Aubrey)*

I'm leaving Aubrey's comment in there just to show what a good editor he's being by giving me subjects to discuss in the letters column. Destroyer is a book editor supreme, Aubrey Sitterson put together at Marvel before either of us left that fine company. So it's something I had written entirely well before Marvel and I parted ways. After Cory and I did issues 7 and 8 of The Irredeemable Ant-Man for Aubrey at Marvel, Aubrey came to me with the idea of reviving DESTROYER for the MAX line and having Cory and I do the book. It was a blast to do the series and I'm very proud of it. I think you'll all enjoy it. I'm happy to report Cory is currently working on issue 4 of the series, and it will be starting in April.

4) When are you taking back over writing duties on Brit? After reading the first trade, I was pretty pumped about having another ongoing series to look forward to every month. But after reading a few issues, I just couldn't get into it and stopped buying them. I'm just not into this Bruce Brown guy's style of writing. Sorry dude.

No, I'm sorry it's not your cup of tea. I think it's a pretty excellent series, but it is coming to an end with issue 12, which should already be out. You'll be happy to know that I did co-write the last issue as well as write a 10 page back-up featuring the origin of Brit. Check it out. There will be more Brit eventually... but the form it will take is still undecided.

Anyway, thanks for giving me something to spend money on every week and good luck in your new position at Image!!!

-Bob Lavay

Thanks! I need all the luck I can get. So far it's been great—big plans for the future.

Robert-

Why can we "hear" Lori's voice when Rick talks to her on the phone?

I understand WHY he's talking to her and I totally buy it, but it just seems weird that we as readers have access to the voices in his head.

We never heard whom Michonne was talking to and it seems that up until now we've been kinda like flies on the wall in terms of witnessing the unfolding story. This new development feels WAY more interactive than the rest of the series and I think it is a little off-putting ...

I dunno ... I guess I'm mainly just curious about the inclusion of this particular narrative device.

Any thoughts?

I could argue that Rick is the central character of the book and so it would be impossible to have told this part of his story without allowing you to hear Lori—and I'd be right too. Is it a bit inconsistent, yes, and I'm sorry if you find it off putting... I just didn't see any other way to tell the story in an effective way.

-Hank

P.S. I also understand that in savage and unjust times (such as what is seen in THE WALKING DEAD) people would certainly suffer from unfathomable injuries made worse by the absence of any medical professionals, but I was curious if, based on the outcome of many characters, you perhaps had a little bit of an amputee fetish? (Another opportunity to talk about why you hired me, pervert. -Aubrey)

And the truth comes out. I hired Aubrey because he is, indeed an amputee.

Zee Robert Kirkman,

When I was 10 I used to love the Batman comics. Before I could get heavy into comics my parents moved and I never bought another one. 13 years later, about a year ago, I'm in the middle of the ocean on a US Naval warship bored out of my mind when I see my friend DJ reading THE WALKING DEAD: Vol 1 & 2. I'm a huge fan of anything related to zombies, so even though I figured comics to be for kids, I had to ask him about it.

After we got done talking, and DJ got done reading, he let me borrow it. The first chance I had I went online and bought all the volumes available. I loved them so much I started buying issues and I'm always pissed when I reach the end because I want more. DJ and I

talking even caused other people we work with to read your work and they loved it too. It's hard not to love Zed.

Now I'm venturing out into other comic series to see what's out there and I'm enjoying it. One thing that DJ and I talked about was how we always thought zombie movies and books had a 99% chance of going wrong when they solved the Z mystery/started to turn the story into how Zed became Zed. Because of this I really hope that new character is full of crap or you are that 1%. Maybe it's a little of both.

We'll see! At the very least—we got at least 60 or so good issues out before it went downhill—right? Right?

DJ and I also think this would make a kick-ass HBO mini-series. If you have any suggestions on other comics please let me know.

Y: The Last Man... The Sword... Wasteland... Fell... Criminal... I'm trying to recommend books that would appeal to you if you did The Walking Dead. There are plenty of great books out there right now.

Congratulations on 50+ and becoming a part of Image.

Thank you,
Dan

PS: I don't suppose there is a way that I would be able to buy any of the original artwork would I? I like collecting art and would love to add a comic to my non-existent comic art collection.

There certainly is. If you go to www.splashpageart.com and go to the Charlie Adlard section you'll find a bevy of his art there. Also, Tony Moore still has a surprising number of pages left for sale from issues 1-6 of this series (at least, last time I checked) so you could hit www.tonymooreillustration.com if you wanted some of that.

Well, with that—another issue down. Cool.

See you all back here next month.

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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C/O FUNK-O-TRON
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OR

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And here we are at issue 59. What fun. Big stuff in store for this book. Big stuff. I'm really looking forward to getting there.

Do let's not waste any time. Letters.

Mr. Kirkman-

Just read issue #57. I love this comic so I have to tell you, don't you fucking dare kill Carl! You've got a kid, you sick bastard so you know Rick will be fucked too. Just please don't do it. Please.

Matt Coppins

You dare me? I'll do it... I swear I will!

Hi Robert,

This is literally the first time I've ever written fanmail to anybody. I only found out about your comic through some zombie internet link - I never knew it existed until about a week ago. You'll be glad to hear that I'm already up to date with the series. It is hands-down the best zombie media I've ever come across. It's so open ended it's perfect. You have the freedom to continue the story as long as you need too, where I always feel that same bite of annoyance with ANY zombie film, because they all have to end and the end is 99% of the time either they all die or the military save their asses! But with this you've shown us what its like for the few who survive longest, because they would! There would always be SOME survivors out there.

Right on.

I know there are other zombie comics out there, but none of them have the gritty realism of this one - you've really hit something here man! One thing I was wondering is if you have any plans to make a TV series (note I don't say film for the obvious above reasons) but a TV show could totally work and it'd be the best shit ever!

Here's hoping.

Anyways I hope you print this, It'd be dead good! LOL

Your pal,
Connor

(By the way, I'm in Ireland here. Not sure if you've got any mail from this far afield yet?)

I don't keep track... Ireland, seems like I have but who knows. You might be special... but probably not. My wife has always wanted to visit your find country.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

First off, thanks for rejuvenating my interest in the comic book genre after 30 years away. Zombies rule.

A question for you though, that I'm wondering if you'll address ...

Gasoline, when not used, tends to deteriorate after several months, eventually turning into a rather nasty varnish-like substance. After a year, the gas will burn very poorly and even damage an engine with gummy deposits. After five years, it's a pretty safe bet that most of the available gasoline would be unusable, creating a new challenge for our survivors. Are you going to address this or am I just being a nitpicky pain in the ass? This is driving me crazy.

Keep up the great work,
JD Ryan

We've all heard this before! Lamé! They've only been at this a year, I'm thinking they'll be out of gasoline entirely before we hit the five year mark. We're fudging things a bit, to be sure... but y'know, the dead don't usually get up and walk around in real life either? I do try to keep things as realistic as possible, so I really appreciate comments like this

and I don't meant to just casually dismiss them. The won't be using gasoline eventually in the book... unless they're able to refine and make their own.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

That was a great issue. First off, how do I word this without sounding like a pedophile ... thank you? I understand that rape, especially with children, is a difficult subject to write, but the fact that you did it and pulled it off really made this comic stand out as one of the best things I've ever read. More often than not, writers skip things like that, or allude to it, and I appreciate that you had the balls to include it in TWD. Anyway, the reason I'm writing is I had a few questions.

1.) I understand zombies aren't the point of TWD, but is there any chance we'll see some kind of evolving from them? I was thinking along the lines of intelligence as in Land of the Dead, not actual growth.

The zombies will not evolve. I've lifted enough from Romero. What is happening though--is that we'll slowly learn more and more about the zombies and how they work as we go along. The unique, weak zombie recently found is an indication of things to come.

2.) Do zombies grow? Like, if someone turns as a teenager and they survive, say, 10 years, are they going to still look like a teenager?

Yes. They would always stay the same age. The body is not functioning the way a living body does. The cells are not regenerating like ours do (or whatever that's called).

3.) Why is Rick willing to travel to D.C. when he knows cities are insanely infested with zombies, and he wants to keep Carl safe?

Time has passed... if any city in the world would be cleaned up by now--logically, it would be D.C. I'm sure he'll still be cautious... if they make it there.

4.) Finally, I know you've mentioned that you do have an end in mind for this series ... This doesn't have anything to do with the whole "going to DC because I know what started the plague" thing, right? I'd like to see TWD make it to at least Issue #100, if not #150.

That's all.
Joseph Jobes

The story doesn't end in Washington... assuming they even make it there.

Dear Mr.
Kirkman,

That was the literally the most horrific thing I have ever seen or read. It made me cry. Please, please stop being mean to Rick and Carl. I don't think I can take it.

Your Fan,
Jonny Lang

Yeah, I'll probably have to back off sooner or later.

Kirkman,

I've been reading a few issues of TWD. Here in Mexico it's fucking hard, near impossible, to find the comic. You need to improve the distribution - the few I have cost me near 10 dollars for each 3 dollar issue. That's damn expensive, you need to bring this shit to Mexico.

I'll see what I can do.

I have a few questions

1. Can dead animals also become zombies, like horses or deer?

Nope. Just the peeps.

2. Are you going to tell us what caused the damn infection?

That would be telling. It remains to be seen. Stick with it.

3. Are you planning to make a videogame of TWD?

Well, that's not up to me, but I'd LOVE to do that if anyone out there is in the industry and interested... get in touch.

I also have a complaint: you shouldn't have kill Axel ... too soon.

Well, that's all. Hope you print this.

Jorge Ruelas

Yeah... I'm right there with you on Axel... I miss that guy... a lot.

Dear Comrade Kirkman,

I just wanted you to know that your little comic book has driven me INSANE! My life is in SHAMBLES! My girlfriend is ready to leave me if I don't stop talking about the latest issue. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I'm like one of your so beautifully illustrated zombies, I HUNGER FOR MORE! The sad thing about all of this is that I only started reading TWD about a week ago. I

finished all 57 issues in a little over a week. It has gotten a little out of control fast. I must say though, in all seriousness, that this comic has officially turned me on to comics. Of course I had read plenty of superhero comics in my day, but this comic has ruined me. I'm afraid to pick up anything else. Afraid it's just going to be a let-down. I have found myself for the first time ever, caring for characters in a book. The strange thing is, I'm an avid reader. I couldn't begin to count the novels and short stories I've read over the years, but never have I ever found myself saddened by a characters death or misfortune. I applaud you Mr. Kirkman. You are truly a master of your craft.

Pretty much anything by Garth Ennis and Brian K. Vaughan would kind of blow The Walking Dead out of the water... I mean, let's be honest. I kick the shit out of Bendis though.

It's also nice to see such a quality publication come out of Kentucky. I live in a very small town in Western Kentucky and it gets a little old having everyone think nothing comes out of this state but meth addicts and backwood racist rednecks. It's very refreshing.

Oh, yeah... how do you explain Abraham Lincoln, Johnny Depp, George Clooney or Larry Flynt?!

Also props to Adlard, Rathburn, and Wooton for their contribution to the publication as well. Keep up the good work guys, and I'll be on pins and needles until the next issue.

Grant Stanley

Yeah... don't forget to mention THOSE guys.

Dear Kirkman,

Thanks for releasing the issues in rapid succession. It's something I've never had a problem with though - as long as the quality remains the same, I can wait.

Good, because it'll soon be "Late as sin in 2010." This year is killing me!

Issue #57 struck a cord with me; we've seen all sorts of horror in the book but somehow the incident with Carl seems like the most poignant yet (and that's saying something). Rick's helplessness could not have been portrayed better. In his desperation to free his son, he had to enact what his primary threat has been doing all along. Justified, given the situation, but also further mirroring the survivors and the walking dead. This has been another horrible moment to witness in the series, but as always compelling.

This book has been my new Preacher in the sense that I can loan it off to friends and colleagues that aren't into comics to begin with and in every case they've headed out to their local LCS for the first time and bought the trades. It is the added twist of indie publishing that also drives them to it - not unlike buying music and apparel from an indie band in order to support them directly. It's important to point out how rewarding this is to consumers. You should be very proud of this achievement.

As for Charlie, Cliff & Rus, you could not have a more perfect team for this book's visuals. Stunning work all around, keep it up!

Thank you,
Simon Mallette

Thanks for all the kind words, Simon.

Mr. Kirkman,

The Walking Dead is awesome.

Okay... good start, keep going...

I wanted to keep this letter absurdly short so it would fit the motif of your newly shrunken letters column.

Thanks for the zombies.
Jason

**Wow... I shouldn't print this out of spite-
-but I will anyway, because this letter
sucks! Don't be like Jason, kids. Write
GOOD letters... please!**

Okay, better luck next time. See you in a few.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Okay, issue 60... the big six-o... if we were a person we'd be nearing retirement age! Ha!

Anyway, we have no intention of slowing down, in fact, I hope you've all noticed just how much we've sped up. As of typing this, we've hit all our dates in 2009 so far and show no signs of missing any coming up (as I type this 61 is in the can and Charlie is already hard at work on 62).

Good times.

So let's answer a little mail here.

Mr. Kirkman,

First, I just want to say again (cuz I know I put this in my first letter to you as well) that you are hands-down my favorite writer right now. I have been reading everything you write and all of it has been golden.

I just finished issue #58 of *The Walking Dead*... geez. I thought the LAST issue was crazy! I am supremely happy that Rick and Abraham had the conversation that they did. I thought Abraham was going to become a problem and Rick was going to have to kill him. Now I am really starting to like Abraham (which of course means he will die). The scene in the beginning where Rick, Abraham and Carl had their talk...it almost brought me to tears. The rest of the comic could have been empty and I would have been ok with that. That first part is one of my all-time favorites now from the entire series.

Cool, I'm glad people are liking Abraham as much as I do. When I conceived his character... before ever actually writing him, I had a MUCH different arc planned for him. You guys should press for me to tell that story in a letters column sometime. I'm glad I scrapped the whole plan.

I was happy to see Morgan again, but not at all surprised that his son had been turned. I WAS surprised however to see that he had not killed him and had in fact been feeding him...that was a little disturbing. It may make me sound heartless but I would have shot him in a second. But then again, I am prepared for when the zombies come, lol.

You never know...

One last question, then I am all done...Why haven't you accepted my friend invite on MySpace? j/k

Because I'm extremely inconsistent with my myspace visits. I sometimes do go to the site for months on end—and friend invites just sit there.

Your ever loyal reader and comic store employee, Jessica Mikesch (yes I am a girl)

Yay for girls!

Dearest Kirkman,

I love your book. I love you. I've never written a letter before. (Sounding familiar?)

It's pretty cool knowing you live around the shithole town of Richmond, Kentucky. It was even cooler seeing Barnes Mill road referenced in *The Walking Dead*.

Man... where'd I do that? I don't even remember. And hey—Richmond isn't a shithole!

To the point, though.

I'm finishing up a degree in creative writing here at Eastern Kentucky University and wanted to let you know that your book has profoundly affected my writing. I don't write shitty zombie stories or fan-fiction, but your storytelling is top notch and almost makes me want to. (I promise I won't.) That's not due to the plot, it's because of your characters and character development. Some people don't get that. It's not always plot, it's the characters that make the story. I think I could read a whole issue about Rick shitting in a hole just because I like his character and because, of course, Adlard and Rathburn make him look so sexy. (I also promise I'm not into scat.)

This letter took a turn...

To the questions and requests now.

1. Please do another spread with all the

character's pictures and whether they've bit it or not. It was cool seeing how many people you've killed. This was my friend Tristan's idea. (That guy who worked at Hastings and would awkwardly try to talk to you.)

Oh, yeah... I remember him. I'll try to do that soon... it's a busy time for the book.

2. Will you be coming to Eastern again to lecture? I missed the first one for whatever reason. I'd like to hear it.

I haven't been asked. I might do it if they asked again.

3. Please don't let Hollywood fuck The Walking Dead and leave it behind, bitter and broken.

Projecting, much? You want to talk about it?

4. I know you've read John Joseph Adams' *The Living Dead* because your quote is on the back of it, but have you read *Wastelands*? It's incredible. Especially the story "Still Life With Apocalypse." It sets my mind on fire.

Haven't read wastelands... might have to look that up.

5. Shout out to Keith who ran Warlords Unlimited here in Richmond. He was a cool dude. I miss him.

Did he die?

AND.

6. Most Important. Seriously. Soon, someone at Comic Oasis will ask you if you have some back issues of *TWD* including #55. Please give #55 up. I need it as much as you need store credit. Thanks, man.

Man... this letter is almost useless to anyone outside of Richmond. I think I've already done this, but if I haven't just tell Ron to bug me about it.

That's it. If I see you here in Richmond sometime I'll probably just stare at you awkwardly and from a distance. I hear I can (unfortunately) resemble David Spade, so if you see me staring at you give me a wave.

I'll just have my security people remove you—no big deal. Stare away!

Take it easy man and keep up the good work. I'll send you a copy of my book if I ever get it out of my head.

Your friend,
Matt McAlister

Good luck with it.

Dear Kirkman,

The Walking Dead #58 wasn't really UNTHINKABLE, although when you flashed this

issue's cover last month I'm sure most of us were misled into thinking that Rick was about to lose Carl. What I would call this issue is HEARTBREAKING. For some reason, Morgan and Duane who had appeared only twice in this series before, had somehow lived on in my head, in a bubble of hope and safety. Now that bubble has burst, and the landscape looks somehow bleaker.

Have you heard of Zack Snyder's new studio? It's called Cruel and Unusual Films. Cruel and unusual...just like this series. I have to be a masochist. As I told you in person at San Diego Comic-Con, I've been here since issue #6, and this series is still my favorite. Looking forward to the Washington story.

Victor Rosario Fermaint

Yeah, Zack was telling me all about it the other day...

Baby-Killer,

It's the week of Valentines Day (issue #58) and I don't have a woman. Since I can't blame myself I'm going to blame you. I'm not an ugly guy. I have my own house, a job that pays well, I'm still young and I have my health. But, there's something about a 24-year-old dude that reads baby-killing comics that drives some women away. But, you have a woman and you don't just read comics...you write them. Since you have a kid, that's proof that you get some. I'm jealous. Does she know you're a baby-killer? In retrospect...it might not have been you. It might have been me when I called Jesus the first zombie. Don't just take my word for it. Dictionary.com says, "noun: a dead body that has been brought back to life by a supernatural force."

Y'know, writing comics is way cooler than just reading them. There's a hierarchy to this. It'd be easier for me to get chicks. Sheesh. Anyway, good luck with it. You're still young, there's time.

Numbered question time...

1. Since it's Jesus would I have to capitalize Zombie when in reference to him?

I believe so.

B. What does your title of "Chief Operating Officer" actually mean?

I'm the guy making sure the chiefs operate properly. Heh "B."

3. Are we going to see another bad-ass 2-page-spread anytime soon like the one of the Governor and his head-tanks?

I'm sure eventually we will.

4. I didn't realize Adlard was from England. Are we going to see any foreign people? It would be awesome to have a crazy Scottish dude with a

bastard sword. Maybe he and Michonne could get into a sword fight.

Then I'd be compelled to write a horrible accent. So no.

E. Where are the "Ted Nugents" and "Charlton Hestons" of the zombie apocalypse?

Living on farms and having a good time? Heh "E."

6. To Charlie and Cliff: What has been your favorite part of *The Walking Dead* where you just had to look at your art and say, "Wow! That is my art. How bad-ass am I?" To which Kirkman and I would respond, "Extremely Bad-Ass!"

I don't have time to write them and get a response... I mean, I gotta have this turned in in a few minutes. But Charlie would probably say "Each and every page, old chap!"

7. When your kid (a girl right?) does career-day at school and she brings you in are you going to freak all the kids out with pictures of zombies eating people? You could tell them that if they study real hard in school they could be a biochemist and one day make zombies a reality. That would be awesome. You might even make it on the local news or CNN. Imagine the sales spike!

Thanks again,
Dan

My oldest is a son, by the time this sees print I should have a daughter as well... but y'know, The Walking Dead isn't THE ONLY thing I write. I could just as easily bring in pages from Space Ace or Ultimate X-Men to show them.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Issue #58 was, as usual, a great read. It's a nice examination of the stress the characters are facing and an insight into where their humanity struggles to make sense of the post-apocalyptic world they face. Specifically, where they find their own violent selves in a violent world, but retain a sense of right and wrong when everything has gone wrong.

I'm sure you'll get plenty of letters commenting on all the story nuance from others though.

Would you be able to answer more of a "mechanical" question about your writing process? How far out do you plot the series you write? Do you have a rough idea of what the next arc looks like? The next year? Or, have you figured this out for a few hundred issues? Just curious.

Thanks for some great tales!

Regards,
Frank Bergdoll

Well, I have a loose idea for the next 100 issues, but really it's pretty vague once it gets past 12 issues away and gets more and

more vague the farther ahead plans get. I try to make sure I have a solid plan for the future at all times... otherwise I'd just be making stuff up. That said, I am able to change my mind and go in drastically different directions of the urge hits me. It's pretty fun, let me tell you.

Master Kirkman,

Well, you did it somehow. You followed up just as strong with issue #58 as you did with #57. Not only did you bring Rick and Abraham together but, you gave us a look at the darkest side of Carl. I love how the characters finally get that in this new world of the Dead you have to be a cold blooded killer in order to survive. That doesn't make you a bad person though. You can kill Mother Teresa and still be a good person as long as you believe that you had to do it!

You're making me feel so much better about myself.

Again you surprised me with Carl's revelation that he is also a black-hearted killer (and a kid too!). This new guy is going to be some real trouble but, Rick, fresh off of Carl's close encounter would be a hypocrite to abandon his old friend just because he murdered a few living people to feed to his zombie son! I just hope Abraham understands too or he will be a very short-lived member of the group.

Now as far as Dale is concerned, he is in big trouble. Abraham isn't going to take lightly to him trying to leave the group (especially if he tries to take any supplies with him) but, more importantly Dale doesn't realize how closely bonded Rick and Abraham are now. Rick isn't going to let Dale abandon him again (even though he was right to leave the prison). My money is on Dale being the next one to die and it being done by someone in the group.

Thanks for another great issue!
Allen S

Let's start taking bets...

Awesome, that's it, kids. Now, if you keep turning pages, you should see a pretty sweet glimpse of things to come in this series. What follows this letters column is a series of promo images we did for online news places to promote The Walking Dead.

The storyline starts in issue 62, be sure to tell your friends!

Also, the covers may or may not contain spoilers... so really, look at your own risk.

See you guys back here next month for issue!!

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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Oh, poor

Dale. Well, we're really getting into the MEAT, heh... of our "Fear the Hunters" arc. I hope you guys are digging it so far.

You may have noticed this issue is a little thicker than usual (and yet the same cover price) that's because we're slapping the entirety of CHEW #1 (although in black and white) by JOHN LAYMAN and ROB GUILLORY. I suppose this was an odd thing to doubt y'know what it's a good book and it's something I've very excited about and in the current economy I know it's pretty hard to take a chance on something new and plunk down that hard-earned cash for a new comic.

So we're helping you out. Now, please, for me, take the time to read it... and if you dig it, do John and Rob a solid and give the second issue a chance. I think you guys will enjoy it or frankly, it wouldn't be back there.

Now, let's read some mail!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I love your work! I've been reading comics since I was 12, (which makes 13 years of comic reading for me), along with my younger sister, and we both love *The Walking Dead*, *Tech Jacket*, *Invincible*, etc. (I wish *Tech Jacket* had last longer!) Congratulations on doing so well in the business—I'm so glad you came along!

One thing I'm wondering is why you use so much written explanation sometimes in TWD? Like in issue #58, when Abraham is relaying his past to Rick, and it's the two of them sitting there, talking it out; I felt it was a little dragged out. I know he was talking about something horrifying, but I thought it might be even more horrifying and engaging if there were a few panels of gruesome flashback images, with the caption overhead of Abraham's narration. Just a suggestion. Don't bust my balls over it though.

No ball-busting. I just made the decision early-on to not do flashbacks that way. I wanted the past to have some distance with the reader... I don't really want to cut back and show these things because the important part for me, is seeing the character think about this stuff while they're talking.

You can argue it's an awful choice... and you may be right... but that's what I wanted to do.

Oh, and if you print this: To Dan who wrote in Issue # 60 that he can't get a girl cause he's a comic book nerd who reads about baby killing—what the hell? He's obviously hanging out in the bars too much, and not spending enough time in the comic book store. To all the comic book boys, in fact: The comic book girls are out there, waiting for guys just like you. Oh, we are OUT there, so stop complaining and come find us.

Many thanks,
Maria

Do you want Dan's email address? Let me know. I could hook that up, Maria. Thanks for writing.

Kirkman,

Hey, thanks for issue #61! Wow ... Carl is going to grow up to be Anton Chigurh (that bad ass in No Country for Old Men)! Seriously, I was totally blown away by the thing with the twins. That could've been the whole issue right there ... but then we get this next step in Carl's ascension to the throne once held by only the baddest of the badasses, Chuck Norris. I would actually put Carl up against Eastwood AND Norris!

Carl would lose...

Speaking of actors, Alex's letter about Abraham being Danny Trejo got me thinking it would be fun to have people write in their ideas for casting *The Walking Dead* HBO series! A casting call like Wizard use to do! However, you should only print letters with good suggestions! (*Careful what you wish for: Mine is ALL professional wrestlers.* —Aubrey) I don't think anyone wants to read five people suggesting Bruce Campbell for Rick. But I AM going to suggest someone for Rick! This guy has the chops, man! Ryan Reynolds!!!! The guy can grow a great beard and totally (to me) even looks like Rick, maybe a year or two too young, but so what? You think he does just fluff like Waiting? How about *The Nines*? Eh!? I could see Danny Trejo being the Governor ... and I want Hal Holbrook for Hershel!

I love that your first example of why Ryan Reynolds should play Rick is "he can grow a beard." Heh... that narrows the playing field.

Also, concerning #61's letter column: Eddie Price had a fabulous letter, but I think he was preaching to the crowd ... anyway, could you get him in front of Marvel or DC's marketing people? Oh, also, issues coming out on time is really rad man! You ALL are doing a great job, I really love this book! Thanks, guys!

David Johnson

I'll see what I can do.

Hey Robert,

I've been an avid reader of *The Walking Dead* for some time now – I love zombie stories. The initial spread of the virus, the shutdown of society, the lengths that people go to in order to survive ... I find it intriguing. Thank you for entertaining me, and giving my fiancée nightmares.

I only browse the Letter Hacks section every once in a while, but I noticed something in issue #59 that caught my attention: About half of the letters printed seem to be sent in by people who download your comic off the internet. There's almost no way anyone can catch up with a whole series within a week by buying all the issues. First off it's quite costly, and second of all, finding an entire collection for sale is a rarity. I'm sure you realize that a lot of people do not purchase your comic, and prefer to grab it for free online. I'm wondering, how does that make you feel? You put in so much work for this book, only to see it spread across the world without having anything to show for it. Of course, readers are readers, paying ones or not. Something can be said for reaching a broader audience, but I'm sure it still stings a little to basically have your livelihood stolen.

First off, this series is reprinted in countless collected editions. So while it may be expensive... I like to think

at least a lot of these people are buying collections. We just released The Walking Dead: Compendium that collected 1-48 for a measly \$60.

I can't wait to find out what awaits Rick and the gang in DC (if they get there). All the best, and keep up the good work.

Regards,
Martijn van Weeghel
Netherlands

Thanks for writing!

Goddamn you, Kirkman! *shakes fist at sky in anger*

It's been months since you released those "The Dead do not Stalk" images and it has been bothering the shit outta me this whole time. I hate cliffhangers and hype of any sort because then that's all I'm thinking about while waiting for said item (be it comic, TV show, etc) to come out and it kills me. Judging from the end of issue #61 it looks like you're FINALLY gonna let us know who's stalking our survivors. THANK YOU! I can't wait.

Hey, I was promoting a storyline in March that started in June! That's not that bad. It's not like that Road to Washington teaser we sent out last year at Comic-Con. Heh... they'll be in Washington soon... I promise.

But in all seriousness, *The Walking Dead* has become one of my top three or so comics each month. Keep up the good work, and don't change a damn thing.

By the way, what's the deal with *Haunt*? When will that drop? I heard you're writing it, and I love me some Todd McFarlane.

Andrew Bilgrav

HAUNT issue 1 ships in OCTOBER. This time for real. The first issue is done already as I type this. I'm very excited for people to finally see this book, it rocks!

Hi there, Mr. Kirkman,

Though I've been cutting down on my comics (and generally becoming disenchanted with superhero comics), I continue to look forward to reading *The Walking Dead*. I just finished issue #61 and absolutely loved what you did with all the kids in that issue, between what happened with the twins and Carl's reaction... brilliant. I can see you've got stuff coming to a boil with Carl, which was creepily foreshadowed by Rick's "phone call" this issue.

Thanks.

I didn't like, however, that not a single person in the group was happy to come across Gabriel, either as a friendly fellow survivor or as a priest. I understand that the group was going through a lot at the moment, and to add another person to the mix is frustrating for them, but to have every single person in the group look at this friendly priest with annoyance – or disdain – just didn't ring true for me.

Well... they've had some bad experiences meeting new people in the past. Even when Abraham and crew there was tension. They'll warm to him... maybe.

But anyhow, the main reason I'm writing concerns something you brought up in the letter column. You mentioned the possibility of a future "Volume 0." I love the idea, and would like to suggest (for overall continuity's sake, of course) that if you do end up writing this, that it please (pretty please?) be drawn by Tony Moore. I'd love to read this story regardless, but for people that show up late in the game and start with Volume 0, it would make for a great segue into Volume 1.

Well, I'm not sure I'll ever do Volume 0... but Tony would definitely be considered. I don't know if he has any desire to return to these characters. He's doing just fine out on his own. His brief Ghost Rider run was excellent.

Thanks for all the great reading (I'm also currently loving *Destroyer!*),
Dan Nadeau
Peabody, MA

Thanks.

Rob,

I was watching Mad Max 2 (You mean The Road Warrior, right? Speak American! –Aubrey) and noticed the similarities between the hostage scene outside the gasoline station and the Governor returning with Tyrese. Have you seen the movie? Did you take any ideas from this?

Adam King

Not on purpose but I'm sure THE ROAD WARRIOR was an influence. I love that movie. All three Mad Max flicks (I don't count the last half of Thunderdome) are excellent.

And gasoline still works!!! Hah.

Hi there,

Been a long-time fan of The Walking Dead – bought pretty much every issue from my retailer since # 43. Having said that, I just HATED your latest issue, # 61. It's not just the story – the cheap shock moment, the characters totally acting out of character, everything.

Please continue.

The whole purpose of this issue seemed to be to shock the readers and make them feel uneasy. But it happens in such a forced, abrupt way that it really bothers me. I mean, what makes a reader feel more uncomfortable than a kid being killed? Yeah, let's kill two kids! Wait, I can top that by making kids kill each other! Why? Who cares? Let's just alienate the readers. It's cheap, plain and simple. There is not even time too come up with an explanation for the first kill. There is no time to get into the psyche of the kid – nobody even tries to talk to him. No, let's kill him for good and then move on.

I'll give you that a scene of them talking to Ben would probably have been pretty good. I wish I'd done that. But hey these two kids have been mostly silent for the duration of this series for the duration and this has been planned for a while. This world would make young children crazy. Think of what they've lived through. I don't think there was anything out of character in the issue.

And when Ben gets killed by Carl (or so it seems) there's barely any time to see the characters' reactions to it. You took so much time developing the characters and now there are so many things happening at once and everything feels rushed and awkward. Even worse, I really can't feel for your protagonists, Rick and Carl, anymore. I know you want to come up with controversial ways to show what humans are capable of in certain situations but I really don't want to spend any time reading about main characters who're killing off kids or even just backing it up. Right now I couldn't give less of a fuck about any of those survivors in your tale and I'm not sure if I want to come back to this series anytime soon.

However, thanks for a nice read until now.
Joerg Nezmeskal

Really, Aubrey? We end on this note? Heh.

Sorry you're not liking the current direction. I feel Carl and Rick are very likeable if you take their environment into account. If you're not into it, by all means, it's your money... and maybe I have messed up. It's a fine line to cross, doing what I want, to keep myself interested so I can try to write the best stories... and also keeping readers happy, trying not to alienate them.

You win some you lose some.

Do take into account though... this series is not ending any time soon... and these characters will continue to grow and evolve and change as time goes.

Maybe you'll change your mind again and like the characters as much as you did before. Or maybe Rick and Carl will die! You never know!

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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And there you have it—issue 64.

Things are just going to get MORE exciting from here on out! Stay tuned.

Now, I think you've probably noticed this issue... is ALSO extremely thick. I hope you enjoyed last issue's free copy of CHEW #1. We won't be making this a regular thing but now this issue we're featuring another SWEET new Image series called VIKING. Flip this book over and you'll see a free black and white copy of issue 1 of that series by Ivan Brandon and Nic Klein. Like CHEW this book is kind of taking the industry by storm, so really check it out. It's just beautiful and the writing isn't half bad either.

I do feel compelled to point out that VIKING is normally printed in full-color and also in a larger format than a standard comic and that the final package is quite amazing, so you owe it to yourself to check it out. Issues 1 and 2 are available now, ask your retailer to reorder them for you. Issue 3 will be in stores in AUGUST.

Hopefully I got through this with less typos than last issue...

Now, let's answer a bit o' mail, shall we?

I'm an avid reader of *The Walking Dead—Letter Hacks*, and wanted to thank you for the Yakov Smirnoff reference in Issue #62. Well played.

Bill B

Awesome, thanks. I don't even remember that, but thanks!

Kirkman,

If you've noticed a spike in sales lately, it's me. I'm the guy. From my own (numerous) purchases to the fact that I've turned everyone from my former contemporary literature professor to my fifteen-year-old nephew on to *The Walking Dead*, you should be noticing a difference in your wallet. And you're welcome. I discovered your book about two months ago—a friend recommended it—and I've been addicted and obsessed ever since. I've even—after an eighteen-or-so year absence—rediscovered my love of the comic book store (who knew I had three great ones within half an hour's drive?!), and again, I thank you.

Having (sincerely) kissed your ass enough, I'd like to ask a few questions:

It's never enough.

1. Who had the foresight to bring along the beard-trimming kit? From Rick's perfect #4 (I assume that's the setting he's using to maintain that uniform beard length)

to Abraham's stubbleless horseshoe moustache, there must be quite a bit of manscaping going on in-between attacks. Follow-up question: Why won't anyone let Morgan use the beard trimming kit? That's not nice. Crazy guys need attractive, manicured facial hair, too.

Well, there are razors of some kind lying around that are being used—they're not completely in the wilderness. And... they've gotten pretty woolly at times. I'm sure Morgan will get in on the act soon.

2. Shouldn't the group collectively be losing some weight? It's been more than a year, right? Andrea's pin-up midriff look on issue #62 even hints at a bit of a pot belly (unless she's arching her back to make her solo cover debut a bit more sexy!). What are they eating, anyway? Can there be that much wildlife? Wouldn't shooting wildlife attract zombies? Perhaps I'm overestimating how much it would take to feed a small group.

Weight loss, unless extremely drastic, is a hard thing to show in a comic. I'm sure everyone has lost a few pounds. Up until recently they were in a well-stocked prison and since then they've been living off non-perishable groceries found along the way or taken from the prison.

3. How the hell should I be pronouncing "Michonne?"

Me-Shawn... but I sometimes say Me-Shown... despite that being incorrect. The only one that annoys me at conventions is Me-show-nay.

If your answer to any or all of the above questions is "You go straight to Hell!" that's alright. I'm honored. Your book is damn near perfect, and you shouldn't change a thing (screw those morons who keep asking for color issues and debating whether or not it would make a better movie or mini-series! What don't they get?!).

Thanks!
Joe Chellino

You go straight to hell!

Hello Kirkman

I love *The Walking Dead*, but I live in Norway so it's hard to get the comic. But last year when I went to Canada to visit my family I started talking with my cousin's husband and I told him about your series and how it was so hard to get some issues over here in Norway. After dinner he went home to get something and I didn't know what he was up to, but when he got back he had about 30 issues of *The Walking Dead*. I almost fainted, I was so happy! Now I think I have read them about a thousand times. I still try to follow up the newer issues, I got surprised when the governor attacked the jail and almost everyone died.

Also I'm looking forward the hunting arc of the series!

Here are some questions for you...

1) Do you read and watch zombie movies and books?

I've yet to read a zombie novel... but I'll get to it eventually. What's that one with the zombie whale? I've been meaning to buy that. Movies, sure... looking forward to Dead Snow (or Ded Sno—isn't it spelt weird due to being foreign?).

2) What is your favorite zombie movie? Mine is Dawn of dead (1978)

Day of the Dead. Shaun of the Dead is a close second.

3) How is your writing process? Much coffee?

Knut-Asbjørn Norway

No coffee. I save it only for the most extreme situations. Because of my lack of ever drinking it, a couple cups can keep me up all night if I need to pull and all-nighter working. I don't really like the taste at all, so I stay away.

Aside from that, I have a home-office that I write in almost exclusively. I try to work 9 to 5 due to having a family. I sometimes work for a few hours late at night after my wife has gone to sleep... but I try to limit that to... less than a night or two a week. Not always the case sadly. For lettering placement, graphics work, interviews, letters columns and basically anything BUT writing scripts I have an office in the town I live in that I work in to get me out of the house. I share a workspace there with Cory Walker and Nate Bellegarde. We throw comics at each other and draw penises on each other's belongings and change desktop images to lewd drawings and pictures when people are away. It's a pretty fun place.

That's why I write scripts at home.

Dear Kirkmania,

Yeah, I liked it. I can only assume the stalkers are new characters, cause otherwise... I've been collecting *The Walking Dead* since before issue #25 now; can't quite recall a time as exciting as this! Andrea, Dale, Glen, Michonne, Carl and Rick Grimes, Morgan...I'm even getting to know the names now! Oh, and there's Gabriel, too. Hope they all get to the church on time!!!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

PS: Thumbs-up for a keeper issue.

Hey, look at you! Good to see you're trying harder. Thanks for writing and continuing to read... everything.

Kirkman, old buddy...

Pigs, as you know, are used for all sorts of human transplant and testing stuff because they are similar to humans in so many ways. So I have one simple, easy to understand question:

Where are the freaking Zombie pigs!?

And btw, thanks for printing issue #62 in color. I'm color-blind but you said you would do it in the last letter column and dude, I totally believe you to be a man of honor so I know you did it. LOL.

Take care
Michael L. Heffron

No problem man—it was really expensive to do that for an issue. I hope it was worth it.

Next up—zombie pigs!! Check out issue 66 for those!

Kirkman,

Hi I'm not sure if you have answered this question yet but I have been wondering about a plot element that appeared early on that is not being used anymore...

When the boys went in to get guns from the city very early on in the comic they discovered that covering themselves in gore is a way to get the zombies to not notice them. It didn't work because it rained but overall the theory was sound.

As the story goes on the characters are totally ignoring this very valuable piece of information. There were many tight binds where they could have "gored up" and walked away from a dangerous situation. Why not carry buckets with blood and guts (and lids to minimize the smell) in the cars when they travel and that way when you are cornered by a herd you can do what is necessary. Was this a plot device you wish you had not introduced and are you ignoring it? Or is it just forgotten?

Matek

Definitely not forgotten. It will be coming up again, eventually. But I think the act of covering yourself in rotted flesh would be so unsavory that it would be reserved for the most extreme situations.

Hey Robert,

One thing nags me about the events in *The Walking Dead* #61 & #62: In issue #61, Ben is shot to death while sleeping on a mattress in a van, then in issue #62 his adoptive parents are shown sleeping the next day in the exact same spot. Wasn't the mattress and van interior covered with blood and gore from the gunshot, particularly if Ben was shot in the head (as was somewhat implied by the fact no one was discussing the need to prevent him from reanimating)? Even if they spent part of the day in between these events doing their level best to clean the van with the rudimentary cleaning tools available in these extreme post-apocalyptic conditions, are these folks in fact sleeping on a mattress soaked in the blood, brains and possible post-mortem bowel and bladder evacuations of their slain child? (*Dark, dude. Really dark. –Aubrey*)

Yer gentle reader,
Jeremy

Well, I didn't get around to showing it but there were two mattresses in the back of that Van, as seen in issue 61, and they threw one of them away. And, it's not always like movies, the exit would could have come out of his jaw or neck after the low caliber bullet bounced inside the skull—it's possible all that mess could have been confined to the mattress.

Still, I will admit that it's a scene I probably should have shown, them dealing with that aftermath... but issue 61 was pretty crammed with stuff already and so I figured I'd gloss over it a bit.

I'll do better next time, I promise.

There you have it, another issue down! Wool! See you back here next month.

—Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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We're fast approaching the end of this little tale... so be sure to come back here next issue to see how things wrap up.

Our Fear The Hunters storyline opens the door for a lot of what's coming up, so while this storyline is coming to an end... this series is still years, possibly decades away from completion. So I hope you're all still having a good time.

I know we are.

Speaking of good times... there was a recent announcement about The Walking Dead being picked up as a potential television show at the cable network AMC with Frank Darabont tapped to write and direct and Gale Ann Hurd attached as producer. Cool stuff, I'm very VERY excited about this.

Hopefully 2010 will be a huge year for The Walking Dead... and not just because of my plans for issue 75.

Now... let's jump into some mail.

Kirkman!

The Walking Dead is my addiction. #63 was a true shocker. You threw me a real curveball with the preacher. When he was introduced a few issues back, I predicted he was in league with the followers and was only posing as a preacher. But oh no... issue #63 reminded me that there is nothing predictable in TWD! Organized cannibals...hadn't even crossed my mind.

Really? I'm glad we threw you with the preacher bit... but I thought the cannibal thing would be seen a mile away, this being a zombie comic and all. I mean, zombies and cannibals go hand in hand.

Oh and by the way, I am tired of reading comments in Letter Hacks suggesting you do issues in color. Pleeeeease do not ever even consider it. Black and white for this story is the only way to go. It provides the drama and the intensity of the moment, and shows off Adlard's brilliant visuals. If it was done in color, I think it would look like a cheese sandwich. Ya know? I want to take part in the story like I do now: adrenaline pumping, not like I am reading just another comic. Keep up the black and white!

Yours Truly,
Jaclyn Senne

Yeah, no color. No way. I try to politely deflect any requests for color Walking Dead comics... I don't even want to do it either.

Kirkman,

So I am sitting at home watching an anime called *Planetes* (also very character driven) and my mind started to wander. I started thinking; "I would absolutely love to watch an anime of *The Walking Dead*." You ever given that any thought? It could run forever. It would be awesome. The storyboard is already done (comic). It could even be black and white. Anyway, I would love to see it! Just a thought. What do you think?

Adam

There was actually talk of this a couple years ago but it never came together. I'm not opposed to the idea. I love anime.

Dear Kirkorama,

More of the same really. And thus: Best comic of the night! Who knew the religious guy with a secret—really *had* a secret! Usually that stuff just goes nowhere; just in general. Chris, the seeming leader of the Hunters, seemed very real to me.

Thank you, Andrew. I really tried hard to give that guy a voice... cool of you to notice.

What is Chew, that flip story, about? And I can hear you saying, if not yelling, why not just *read it*? Right? Maybe I will. If it's a hit. I remember abandoning *The Walking Dead* after issue #1...yet I've been collecting since right before issue #25! So there you go. Besides, I would've called it "Chew-y."

It's an awesome new series from Image Comics that I feel like you should be reading so I gave you issue 1 for free. For anything past that, you're just going to have to read that free comic I gave you and decide for yourself. It's a great book.

I think the long explanations that TWD non-dead characters go on and on about is a way of providing narrative and recaps, no? Any reason on why the bad reverend turned his back, and his door, on those good people like that? I've been thinking about what you said in the dialog this issue; you not only have to do good and not do bad, but accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? How does one go about that? Does it involve candles...? Oh shoot, now you got me all worried. Oh hell... er, I mean, oh well. Till next time, keep it Kirklicious! (*Gross.* —Aubrey)

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

Fear, man... he did it out of fear. Until you've ever been in a situation like that... you don't know how you will react.

Kirkman et al,

I love the book! Zombies are a personal obsession of mine, and the book has held true to the old, shambling, Romero zombies I love the most—the heck with this newfangled running fad.

As so often happens, despite having enjoyed the whole run, I've not written until today because I have a little quibble. In *The Walking Dead* #63, you have Father in a theological discussion with Eugene. Eugene says, "The rule is, in order to get into heaven, you not only have to do good deeds and not do bad deeds. You also have to accept Jesus Christ as your personal savior?" and the priest agrees. I can't remember whether you noted whether he was Catholic, Episcopalian or other, although the church is very classic American Protestant. However, I can't think of a single large denomination of Christians who would agree with Eugene's statement so unequivocally. A Catholic (which I am), for example, would agree with the first part, about good works being necessary for salvation, while a Reformation-influenced Protestant would strongly disagree. Likewise, the second part, accepting Christ

as your personal savior, is almost word-for-word the language of Baptists and others who reject salvation by works. Also, there aren't a whole lot of Christians who would say, or say absolutely, that all non-Christians, having heard of Jesus or not, are damned to hell. Southern Baptists would be one of the few, and even there (since there's no absolute teaching body, as with the Catholic Magisterium) there is disagreement. Here's an article from my local newspaper that touches on a few of the differences:

<http://www.rickross.com/reference/fundamentalists/fund211.html>

I stridently disagree with the idea that a God who is love would do such a thing, so it was troubling to see it presented as an authoritative position, especially when there is so much disagreement with that theological idea especially in contemporary churches. As it notes in the article, the current Pope has said that it's not non-Christians but rather bad Christians, as ones who know the truth and don't live according to it, who will be punished most severely. Unfortunately, most people don't go to the source to learn what a particular religion or denomination teaches, and there's a lot of misinformation spinning around, especially in the news and entertainment media, and on the internet. I did appreciate that Father got some points in on Eugene in the discussion as well—one-sided is never good in a debate!

Like I said, only a quick thing, and don't let the length of it think that it'll make me stop reading *The Walking Dead* (or *Invincible*, or *Destroyer*, or *The Astounding Wolf-Man*). This is no KIRKMAN YOU HAVE OFFENDED ME AND I REFUSE TO PUT EYES TO ANYTHING YOU PRODUCE letter.

Michael

No worries, Michael. I apologize for the misrepresentation. In my mind, I think of Gabriel as a Baptist, despite the fact that I don't know of any Baptist preachers who wear the collar... but hey—I'm sure one of them is out there. Anyway, if anything I'd say Gabriel won the argument. Despite my stance as an atheist, I tried to be as even-handed as possible here. I just thought the science guy wouldn't hesitate to get into a discussion with the religion-guy once they got bored.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you very much for this book, my name is Cédric and I'm a French reader of comics for 15 years now and I want to tell you that your work is really appreciated in France. All my friends who have read *The Walking Dead* have loved it. Each month, it's becoming like a drug and I eat literally your book :). (Gross. —Aubrey) I like your story, your cliffhangers (it's very rare nowadays to have a true cliffhanger in each issue) and your characters even if I know that they will die one day in one of your stories.

I eat literally your book... it's moments like this that make the letters column worthwhile.

1) Is it possible in a future story to have a French tourist for example who doesn't speak English meeting or joining Rick's crew on the road ? It could be fun, no?

Well, I don't speak French and really don't know much about the French (you guys can fly right?) so it might be fun... but not for me! I'd have to do research!

2) Could you give us some news of *Image United* or *Haunt*?

Haunt will be in stores a few weeks after this very issue, so I don't really need to say much about that. Just buy it, it's awesome. Image United will be released in November... and holy heck is it amazing. Larsen, Liefeld, McFarlane, Portacio, Silvestri and Valentino... all drawing a book together? It's going to be great! And I'm writing it! You'll love it. Buy it. Six issues, starting in November. Sweet!

3) What do you think of your character Eric O'Grady in his new team (Thunderbolts)?

It's great to see him still kicking around and doing his thing. I hope he's around for a good long time. It's always gratifying to have something you create for Marvel to live on past your time with him. I love it.

All of you are doing an amazing job so don't stop, thanks guys!

Cédric C.

We won't do it. Promise.

Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading #63, and while I'm not the type to write a letter, I am the type that reads the letters in the back of your book. However, something you said in a response to a letter really struck a cord with me. A reader criticized you for not **SHOWING** flashbacks. You responded by explaining to the reader that it was more important to show the character, thinking about their story as they tell it. I have to applaud you for this. Too often writers fall back on flashbacks, forgetting that the **TELLING** of the story is **JUST** as important as what actually happened. Bravo to you for sticking to your guns with this technique.

Well, the writing rule is show, not tell... but y'know... I figured I'd give it a shot with this book and it seems to work out okay.

Also, since I'm writing, I have to comment on issue #63. Cannibals? Really? I'm skeptical as of now. But I have faith—you have come up with some of the most terrifying bad guys I've ever read. The Governor was ranked by IGN as the 86th comic book villain of all time. You were **ROBBED!** That guy did, and still does, scare me. As I said, I'm skeptical about the new villains, but I've learned that sticking with *The Walking Dead* pays off in spades.

Thanks for a great book and years of entertainment!

Trey Gregory

Trust me, man... we'll be okay. Cannibals will be fine.

Hey Robert,

I have been reading *The Walking Dead* since issue #10 and look forward to the read every month. I love the series and the characters and am eagerly waiting to see what unfolds on the trip to Washington. I am writing this letter, however, to urge you to remove the white banner that has appeared on the top of the comic with the "Fear the Hunters" arc. Having the title and the number of issues of the arc out on the cover takes me out of the story. I liked that *The Walking Dead* is one long story with mini-arcs along the way but feel the story is better served when the marketing aspects such as these are not used. So many comics publish stories to fit trade publications that certain pacing becomes more obvious when you know how many issues there are in the story. Now, perhaps you will play with those conventions to throw things off but I would prefer the mystery of not really knowing when a particular arc is going to end.

Just my two coppers. Otherwise keep up the great work!

Christian

Well, normally I'd be inclined to agree with you but I've heard from a number of retailers and they've all said that the storyline with the title heading on the cover has actually tremendously helped sales. Now, we all know The Walking Dead is a successful book (thank you all) but hey—I'm not going to pass up additional sales for anything.

So, it looks like moving forward, we might do this once a year or so, when there's an important story happening. I do promise to use it sparingly. And there you go... another letters column down. Yeah. I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman

P.S. Cory Walker has downloaded the new PATTON OSWALT CD (legally, from iTunes) and is listening to it in the studio... and it's HILARIOUS and I've been listening to it the whole time I did this letters column... and well, there are probably more typos than usual in this letters column.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
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WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to Issue 68. Whoopee!

I need to point out that this issue marks the end of our big "on time in '09" year-long endeavor to get to my books out on time every month for a full year. I'm happy to report that we made it. This issue, like the other 11 of this year will be hitting on its exact solicited ship date. So yeah.

I can't take much... or well, any of the credit, because all I really did was keep up with Charlie, who is a machine... and he picked up my slack on more than one occasion over the year... so a big round of applause for Charlie Adlard.

Cliff Rathburn and Rus Wooton also deserve a big pat on the back. They also did a swell job of keeping up with Charlie.

And Aubrey Sitterson deserves a pat on her pretty little back for helping me keep up with Charlie. She's been a huge help.

So in celebration of meeting our deadlines... we're planning on meeting all of our deadlines next year, and beyond. We have no plans to fall off the wagon any time soon.

Pretty cool, huh?

So yeah... let's answer some mail.

Kirkman,

I think The Walking Dead #66 is one of the best issues I have read from this series. It shows the extremes this group will go to in order to survive. That being said, I just wish we could have seen a moment between Glenn and Dale. Glenn is the one surviving adult from the original group that we did not see speak with Dale after he was infected. They might not have spoken a lot within the comic, but I like to think outside of the panels they had some interesting conversations. I see Dale, the oldest one of the bunch, giving advice to Glenn, the youngest adult of the bunch. Especially after Glenn's marriage to Maggie. Wouldn't Dale give Glenn some matrimonial advice? I like to think he did. That being said, I think Glenn was spot on at Dale's funeral. Dale was not a burden on anyone and he ended up being the one who warned the group about the hunters. Anyway, keep up the great work and I promise not to stop buying the comic and forcing my roommates to read it. And by the way, Glenn has been one of my favorite characters from day one.

Aaron Valdivia

Well, there are downsides to having a book with such a large cast. There are concessions that have to be made from time to time to leave room for other things. I certainly would have liked to have had a scene between Glenn and Dale--but I don't think they have a relationship quite like you imagined, so I don't feel like we lost much by not having a scene between them.

PS: I'd be interested to know how Mexico has been doing during this crisis. Will you ever show what's happening beyond the United States?

I will only show how things are in another country if the characters go to another country or meet someone who has been in another country. I like keeping things vague. Maybe things aren't so bad in other countries--maybe they're worse.

Dear Kirkman,

Thank you for making and continuing to make The Walking Dead.

Even as I grow tired of the sickening amount of zombie films, books, games, comics, and other forms of media around me, The Walking Dead remains one of the best products dealing with zombies ever created. Now, on to my question: Do you ever get frustrated by how slowly you are forced to tell a story through the comic book medium? Last issue you wrote that you had ideas for the next 200 issues of The Walking Dead. I realized that roughly equates to the next 16 years. Is there any chance you could take a single arc of issues and publish that first as a graphic novel instead of it taking five or so months? I'm not really that familiar with the comic book industry, so I don't know if that sort of thing is done. Anyway, I was just curious. The prospect of spending 16 more years reading The Walking Dead certainly sounds amazing to me.

Thanks,
Eric

It's not as though we could just put out a 120 page graphic novel one month instead of releasing a 22 page comic... not without spending every waking moment for a year doing extra work. On average, it takes a comic book artist one day to do an entire page. Sometimes more, sometimes less, but on average it ends up taking 22 work days to produce 22 pages of comics. Charlie is a little bit faster--but most artists are slower than that, hence the wealth of fill-in issues out there. There are 22 work days in the average

month... that's why monthly comics are 22 pages. So the work, and the time it takes to do, dictates the schedule.

16 years certainly does sound like a lot of time-- but I have no plans on quitting any time soon. As long as people are digging this series, and we're all still enjoying ourselves... we'll keep it going.

Kirkman,

While I found this storyline to be incredible I was at first disappointed with the ending of it in issue #66.

When Rick is speaking to whom he assumed was Abraham I was thinking something totally different. I felt the "<krik>" sound effect was one of three things. I was sure it was either a hunter that they missed, the priest packing some heat or a zombie coming in too close. You can imagine how shocked I was at what really caused the noise.

Then I realized what makes this series so brilliant is I simply can't predict what you have in store for the readers. Now I am of the mindset that an issue could probably only disappoint me if I could successfully guess the entire issue's contents prior to reading it.

Nicely done,
Brandon Borzelli

PS: Does Axel have a brother out there? I really miss him.

I miss him, too. As tempted as I am, I could never do something as lame as introducing a twin brother or something. My hope with the TV show is that characters like Axel and Tyreese will make it into the show and I'll get to write/see them again in some capacity.

Dead Heads,

FEAR THE HUNTERS was fantastic! Totally blew me away! It is so great to see our party flex their muscle. Who says this isn't a SUPERHERO book?! Michonne, Abraham, and Rick, are at least

as tough as that pussy Nick Fury and the Black fucking Widow! Not to mention Carl is as badass as 11-year-old Robin. It seems there wasn't too much to fear about the hunters after our guys got pissed. It was just really nice to see our people win and hand the bad guys their asses without someone getting away like all the other comics do. I am a total fan of mutilation (*Weird. -Aubrey*) and I really dug the way you presented it. The two-page-spreads were totally awesome. Rick and the others looked like the bad guys the way they were drawn all foreboding and shit.

A fan of mutilation? I'm with Aubrey.

It is nice to see Carl in the book. I love that Rick was scared that Carl would think he is a monster and hate him if he knew what they did to the hunters and that it ended up being Carl he was talking to the whole time instead of Abe (But it seems a little strange that Rick is scared that Carl will see him as a monster because of the hunters. Wasn't it just a few issues ago that Carl watched his dad shred the guy who tried to rape him? If I remember correctly, Carl had a slightly satisfied look on his face as he watched). Now Carl can tell that he offed that bitch Ben and still be accepted by his daddy. I think it is going to be a very interesting to see how Rick reacts now that he knows Carl is a cold-blooded killer too. I am guessing that it will be an ongoing theme of the book for a while (as he tries to make his boy less of a murderer while still keeping him alive in a world that is fucked in the head). It reminds me of the fear that Mark has about Oliver being too cold-blooded.

The fact that Rick feels so strongly about what he did to the hunters is meant to indicate just how intense what you didn't see was. Rick crossed another line beyond beating Carl's potential racist to a pulp.

Anyway I think the real fear that the hunters presented was the philosophical kind. Rick is starting to wonder if living like a total animal is what he wants for himself and his son. It keeps them alive, but is the way they are living worth it?

I am all for turning them into murdering, raping, pillaging cannibals but, that is just me. (*Weirder. -Aubrey*)

No matter how you deal with it I will be reading and loving it.

I might get a tattoo that says "Kirkman Rocks" on my ass! (*Weirdest. -Aubrey*)

Allen S.

Yeah, moving along...

Dear Kirkman,

I've been a reader since issue #1 and something that has been bothering me ever since the start of the series is the coma that Rick was in. This makes me question if he ever truly woke up or has he been dreaming this for years? If you go back to the very first comic you will see that he's not in any form of protected room and the room does not even appear to have a door on it. It just seems unreal that he survived to the point of waking.

Then the events that take place: Everything from finding everyone that truly mattered to him all alive. Then, of course, he loses his best friend. These sort of ups and downs repeat throughout the series - just look at the prison and what happens afterward. To me it seems like a dream with a pattern. (*Of course. -Aubrey*) Then, of course, are the characters: Take Dale for instance - he seems to be (or rather was) a part of Rick. He even resembles him as if it was an older and wiser version. They even look similar. Then there is Tyreese, who easily could have been part of Rick's memory, as Rick was a football fan. I mean, what are the chances of running into a former pro football player by pure luck? Then, of course, it could explain why he hears his wife's voice when he picks up that telephone, as Rick may not be crazy but it could just be part of the dream. (*Of course. -Aubrey*) If this is not a dream I do hope you can confirm it. If you don't I am stuck assuming it is unless you kill Rick and continue the comic. (*Of course. -Aubrey*) Michael

It's not a dream. I feel like that would be a slap in the face to all the people who have been following this story for years... also, it's kind of a contrived story device. "It was all a dream" is not where this story is headed. I promise.

Hi,

Just a quick note to say thanks for an amazing series - It has brought this 42-year-old back into comic shops on a regular basis after an absence of many years. Compliments aside, what

were you thinking with the cannibal storyline? I am sorry but it is just too unbelievable. Yeah, yeah, I know - what kind of crank has no problem believing in a zombie apocalypse but complains about cannibals, but allow me to explain my position...

My issue is simply one of trying to maintain an air of realism in the series. If the zombie apocalypse has decimated the human population, killing something in the order of 98% of the population, then there will be plenty of available food (canned and dry goods) on which the remaining people can survive. There would be no need to resort to cannibalism. I have no problem with the introduction of cannibalism into a story but it should flow logically from the situation. S.M. Stirling uses cannibalism very effectively in his Emberverse series. The reader has no problem believing in the reality of cannibalism in these stories because the massive populations of our cities cannot be maintained without modern technology and transportation systems. Stirling introduces it in such a way that it makes horrific sense. I am sorry but having people - who must live in a semi-rural area or else would have more ready access to canned food supplies - complain about how hard it is to hunt animals does not logically explain a descent into cannibalism. Didn't you earlier have a zombie successfully kill a deer? A zombie can kill a deer but a human with a rifle could not?

Keep up the good work even when providing issues to debate. You keep producing and I will keep buying.

Thanks,
Wesley Rodney

They're in a largely rural area, where there aren't a lot of houses. There was a lot of looting during the early days of this worldwide catastrophe. So stores are ransacked and when people went into the cities for protection--they took food with them. So yeah, food is scarce in this area. And hunting enough game to keep a group fed on a regular basis... is difficult, especially if you've never hunted before. That opposed to just being able to trick someone into coming with you and killing them later... I know it's a hard leap to cannibalism, but these people were starving.

Hello Robert,

I'm really a big fan of this astonishing comic. Also I get that you plan on working on it for a long time, and aren't going to end the story for many years to come. Now I wonder, as with all big comics (especially manga) projects, what would happen if you would fall victim to, let's say, a zombie attack? :) (*Creepy. -Aubrey*) Don't get me wrong, I really hope you will be able to show us your talent for many more years, but the possibility of death is always present. (*Creepier. -Aubrey*) For such a case, did you deposit the whole The Walking Dead storyline in a safe, so that anyone else could finish it? To be honest, I doubt so, as many events in the comic seem to be rather spontaneous. But still, please answer me this question (in the hope that I will outlive you anyway :)). (*Creepiest. -Aubrey*) (Sorry for my bad English, it's not my native one).

Greetings,
Slavisa

No, I do not have a "break glass in case of death" case in my house with 100 Walking Dead scripts in it. The thing is, I have rough plots stretching far into the future, but the story isn't written until I write the scripts. When I write the actual scripts I move plans back/forward add/subtract and do all kinds of changes to allow the story to flow naturally and to accommodate any last minute good ideas. At best... I'm only ever maybe 4 or 5 issues at most, ahead of the released comics. I do strive to get further ahead but it never seems to work out between the two kids and the various other projects I do.

So if I died today, issue 70 would be the last issue, but by the time this issue comes out, I'll probably be on 71 or 72. So... that's how many issues you'd have until it ran out.

But y'know, look at it from my perspective, sure you would never see the end of this thing... but I'D BE DEAD... and I'm sure that's no fun. So just y'know, live with it. At least you'd be alive.

That said, I'm 30 right now, so if nothing tragic happens, I hope to finish this series before I'm even remotely close to dying. Let's be honest, what are the odds of this thing lasting another 20 years? Surely by then I will have put aliens in this thing and run it into the ground.

And with that mostly depressing and slightly uncomfortable note, I bring this letters column to a close.

See you all back here next month, and next year. See you later 2009!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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Well guys and gals, here we are at issue 75. Oh, and this is Robert Kirkman by the way. I've given Sina the night off.

I hope you all enjoyed this issue. It represents a major turning point in this ongoing Community story line. Things are going to start to get really interesting for here on out, so y'know, stay tuned.

We've got a lot of cool stuff here in this special anniversary issue. There's a sweet back-up that I'll tell you about at the end of this letters column (so stay tuned!) and after that we have a very awesome pictorial preview of The Walking Dead television series on AMC. I believe this is the very first time you'll get to see most of the characters in full costume as they're going to appear in the show. So enjoy--and remember, you saw it here first!

Now, I'd like to thank you all for sticking with us this long and making The Walking Dead the hit that it's become and (thankfully) continues to be. I'd like to thank everyone who's ever worked on this series, Tony Moore, Cliff Rathburn, Rus Wooton, Aubrey Sitterson, Sina Grace and most of all Charlie Adlard, for all their hard work on the series. Thanks so much, guys and gal.

And Sina really busted ass to get 74 and 75 out in July so that we'd be back on time (that's right, we're totally back on time, 12 issues will be released this year, just like last year!) so a second thanks for Sina. And y'know, Charlie, Cliff and Rus really burned the midnight oil to make this happen as well.

I'm not going to bore you with more thank yous... I should probably thank Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen and Eric Stephenson for all their advice and insight along the way... but then they'd all get swelled heads and be even more difficult to deal with. What a great bunch of publishers we've had here at Image over the years.

So that'll be it for now, thanks for reading and here's to 75 MORE issues of this book... and hopefully more after that.

On to the letters!

As avid readers of your fantastically wonderful comic book, The Walking Dead, we have a list of demands. We want our demands addressed right now! Please.

1. Andrea and Rick hook up. Since I am the chick of this crew and typed the letter, my demand goes first.

They certainly seem to get along...

2. Radio transmissions. Where is the attempt to find CB radios in trucks to try to communicate with others? And we don't mean Rick going coo coo for coco puffs and talking into a dead phone.

Eh... I always figured that this stuff would have been done in the time that Rick was in his coma and completely ruled out as a viable option. There aren't a lot of people alive out there and outside of the community, electricity is pretty much a thing of the past.

3. Douglas is creepy. Someone on Rick's crew needs to take him out. Maybe this happens in issue 75. We theorize that it will be all out Civil War and look forward to seeing Creepo and

his creepy crew go down.

We'll see. I don't think he's creepy at all, but maybe that's just me.

4. Ammo as currency. Once Rick's crew sets up camp somewhere and maybe starts trading with other people, let bullets be currency. At this point, bullets are much more precious than gold.

They've not really met up with anyone they need to trade with. They're still at the point where they're pooling

resources.

5. Zombies. This just might be the easiest demand. HELLO?!?! WHERE HAVE THE ZOMBIES BEEN?!?! WE WANT THE STINKING UNDEAD!!

There will always be zombies. They have never been the focus. Don't worry, there will be more zombies than you can shake a stick at in the coming issues. These last two issues have had zombies--right? Right?!

6. Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, National Guard or Special Ops. We want to see at least one battalion of armed forces. The United States has the biggest armed forces in the world and we want to see some of that force.

They would have been the front lines... we saw them in Atlanta... we'll see the remains of them in DC. We may eventually see more... but the military is never going to show up in large numbers. Not going to happen.

7. Nazi Zombies. We know it's been done before in another format but maybe one Nazi zombie in the background would be neat to find. Kinda like Where's Waldo.

Okay, you're losing me...

8. Animals. We're pretty sure the zookeepers didn't stick it out to take care of the animals. In the midst of an intense zombie fight, Rick's crew runs into a pack of hyenas. Or zombie hyenas. Or maybe animals and zombie animals battling it out.

Only if they were living near a zoo. I mean, you're never going to just run into a lion or something just because there are no zookeepers. The sad fact is most of those animals would be locked up and starved to death because the last thing anyone is going to do is "well, these zombies are out there eating people... I need to let all these dangerous animals out too just in case I die and leave them locked in their cages." So... no hyenas.

9. Hurry up and make the damn tv show already. We can't hardly wait.

October!

10. Obviously we are juiced for the tv show, but we want a video game too.

We'll see.

11. And last but certainly not least, Jake and Ryan (the two kids in our crew), demand to know how long has it been since the zombie apocalypse started. Will the zombies ever just die out?

It's been about a year. Will the zombies ever die out?

We'll just have to wait and see. Wouldn't it be great if the series lasted THAT long?

If you do not meet our demands Mr. Kirkman, we will do absolutely nothing in retribution. We will continue to purchase your super awesome comic book. So, no worries.

Your faithful followers,

Scott, Erin, Chuck, Jake, and Ryan

Wait--then why the hell did I read all that?!

Just thought you guys might want to know that if you're trying to intrigue us with Davidson then it's working. I've actually started randomly posting his name on a certain message board devoted entirely to Walking Dead discussion (although sometimes there's

some divergence with people talking about Crossed). I keep hearing complaints that the story has nowhere to go and that it's

gotten slow. I tend to disagree and see all the slow parts as character development. It's like people forgot just how long Tyrese was around before he was decapitated. Or just how involved with Lori and Judith we were when they were killed in issue #48. It takes a certain amount of time to build up to that kind of impact. I'm just now starting to like Abraham for instance and he's been around like ten issues or something right? I think once you have as much of a purge as what happened in the prison it takes a little time to re-establish footing.

I think you guys have it under control and I'm looking very forward to the TV series.

All The Best,

Jason Hart
Tulsa, OK

PS. DAVIDSON!!!

Abraham has been around for over 20 issues at this point right? So does that mean the story isn't moving slowly because it seemed like less issues? I'll take it!

Dear Kirkman and crew

Congratulations on pushing the limits once again with Michonne's nipple slip. You never cease to amaze me at how far you are willing to take this comic. I am sure you will get a lot more crap for this then the time you had Rick rip out the kiddie rapist's throat with his bare teeth.

That nipple slip was all Charlie. So thank him.

I can't wait for issue 75 so Rick and crew can finally meet the aliens. While I don't think this will be a large plot point (but feel free to prove me wrong) I do have a few theories as to how you might do this. Political aliens, people are always complaining that you don't have enough ethnic characters. Cameo aliens, zombies or throw away characters that happen to look Invincible or Omni Man. Fake aliens, some random dudes pretending to be zombies for whatever reason. Alien cult, an individual or small group that are convinced that the zombie apocalypse was started by aliens.

Aliens? Are there aliens in this issue? Stay tuned.

On a personal note I would like to thank you guys for giving me the all time best dodge to political questions. I work at a hospital and hospital personnel are notoriously liberal and I am not. I started reading TWD during the last presidential election so when anyone asked me about my opinion I would tell them that I am for any party that helps bring about the inevitable zombie apocalypse. It was meant as a joke and to get people to leave me alone but now zombies are my official political opinion. Thank you.

James Kephart II

Well, if you're a conservative... you've chosen the right party for bringing about the zombie apocalypse. Oh, I'm kidding, calm down. Uh... um... wakka wakka.

Dear Robert,

I have been a faithful reader of TWD since issue #1, but I have to say I am disappointed with the current "Washington D.C." storyline.

I usually sit down to read chunks of TWD, 6 to 10 issues at a time, to get the full impact of the continuity. I just sat down and read issues 67 to 73 and it just doesn't seem like very much is happening.

In terms of ominous foreshadowing and dramatic tension, all you've given us is a few conversations about somebody named Davidson and a kid with a black eye. That's not a lot to hang your hat on.

Since The Community is presented as a safe place to live compared to being on the road, Rick's desire to get his guns back makes him seem distrustful and maybe a little crazy from too much stress.

Does it? Hmmm.

The zombies were originally the villains of the story, always waiting to strike, always providing the background tension and constant threat of attack against the human cast of characters. Lately they seem to be an inconsequential detail, an afterthought, an annoyance that shows up every 3 issues just to remind the reader that they are still out there. But ho hum. I don't get the sense that they are much of a threat or part of the story any more.

Well, maybe that's deliberate, to lull readers into a false sense of security.

That reduces TWD to a boring soap opera of people who talk, talk, talk, blah, blah, blah, about the mundane details of their daily lives. The worst thing a comic book can deliver is a story that is as boring as everyday life.

That's pretty much what TWD 67-73 has been. From what I've seen in Previews this story is going to DRAG ON for at least 3 more months! For the first time I no longer look forward to

the next issue. You say you're going to deliver something big in issue 75, but why should I have to be bored for 9 or 10 months waiting for something exciting? You're trying to juggle the TV show, Haunt, Image United, and the Viltrumite War in the pages of Invincible. I can't help but think TWD is at the bottom of your To Do List. It makes me wonder if I'm going to keep buying this book for very much longer.

Sorry. But things have just gotten too boring for me. And Charlie Adlard's crude and simplistic art doesn't keep the story afloat when the writing sags.

DMC

You're certainly entitled to your opinion. All I can say is that if you go back to issues 15-20 you'll see the exact same things said about the prison storyline. We're building to things... it's what the book does. Seriously, stick with it. They've been in the community for FIVE issues. Give it some time.

Dear Kirkman, I was given the following letter to pass on to you:

"Sina Grace,

In regard to your opening to the letter column in issue #73 about there not being enough zombies in the first half of the book I just wanted to let you know zombies aren't needed in this series.

Yours Truly, The Governor"

Brandon Borzelli

Thanks Brandon, I disagree, I think that without the zombies this is just a boring soap opera... but I really appreciate you sticking up for me.

Dear Snap, Kirkman and Pop,

I'm amazed how easy it is to get lost in this series, when nothing really ever happens! A roamer attack? *Gasp*!...That's a new one. And boy is this a hard letter column to get printed in lately! But aren't they all? Dying breed, too. Looking forward to Guardians of the Globe...I LOVE IMAGE!!!

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

I love it when I read an Andrew Shaw letter and I don't know it... so I'm thinking, does he like it? Does he hate it? I can't get a read on this guy... what a weird letter... then I see who sent it and it's all better. I love you, Andrew.

SO... it's our 75th issue, holy heck right! I know what you're all thinking, but first... a letter and a response that was printed for the first time way back in issue 7... over 200 issues ago! Read below!

Hey guys,

I just read the first two issues of your fine book, only to realize, that everything I could have said was already mentioned in the letters page of #2. The reason I write, besides thanking you for 2 awesome issues, is that you said that this book is going to be around for years and years. Well, this book is really great, but it feels more like a maxi-series to me and there are too many good stories that got boring because the authors just wouldn't stop. I hope you will... when everything is said and done;) Until that happens I wish you only the best,

Rene

I will never stop writing this book. I plan on riding it right into the ground. When I run out of ideas I'll just start adding aliens and stuff. I recommend jumping off at issue 75. Everything up to that point will be kick ass, so don't worry.

Wait a minute--what did I just say?! Don't jump off this book at issue 75--it's just now finally getting good!! GAH! It's so funny the things you say when you don't know for sure if you're actually going to last.

But here's the thing... I aim to please. I promised ALIENS in issue 75... and I plan to deliver. Did you think this issue was over?! DID YOU?! Think again mother-fuckers! Shit's about to get REAL!!

Go read that back-up... but remember, it's all just for fun. And be sure to be back here next issue. Which I promise, probably will not have aliens. See you in a month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

So, hey, that show called The Walking Dead is on AMC at this point, and you are all amazed by the fourth episode -- which Robert penned! Good work, Robert.

Speaking of good work: thank you everyone for checking the TV series out, and letting us know your thoughts! The folks at AMC put out a great show, and everyone's been super supportive, and now we've got a second season! Big woot!

A lot happened in issue 77, so let's devote some space to your awesome readers...

Dear Robert and Sina,

Something I miss is the letter columns of times past. The small print, multiple pages, etc. Now, with Sina I would think you would have more time to devote to such things. It's one of the main reasons I buy the book in floppy format to begin with-- along with the fact that the book is like crack and I can't wait for the collections. But in the golden olden days, one could look forward to a few pages of letters in small print and lots of back and forth, I miss that. Just thought I'd share my two cents.

Sincerely,

Matt (still not mike) Cashel
thanks for your time.

Well, Matt. We haven't changed the ingredients to make the crack any less potent for you, and we'll do our darndest to cram more letters!

At the end of the day, I love letters columns as much as the next guy, but I was spending a LOT of time on them in the past and that time just isn't there anymore, I'm sorry to say. Even Sina has much better things to do than devote 5 hours to a 10 page letters column. That said, I do miss them, too... maybe we'll go back and do one like that every now and then when time permits. I'll see what I can do. (I'm in italics, I'm Robert Kirkman, you guys get that I'm in italics without me having to tag every response with my name right? Good.)

Dear Robert, Charlie, and the WD gang,

I really enjoyed Issue #77, especially the cliffhanger at the end. (You're the king of those, Robert...not Sylvester Stallone). It's downright frightening you can pull this off every month (or so). Are you robots or something? So, we all knew the walls would come crashing down eventually, but I hope the "No Way Out" conflict isn't just a rehash of the prison. I think I remember you assuaging such fears during a previous Letter Hacks column.

Robert, Charlie, Cliff, and Rus are complete machines when it comes to this book, yes. I think this issue alone will prove that "No Way Out" is building to be a completely different path than the prison. I've got two comments/questions: 1) Charlie, I like that you don't overuse splash pages. It always seems essential to the overall through-line and characters. What's your criteria for using one and what artists do you admire for their splash page abilities? (OK, I guess that's a two-parter.)

From the desk of Mr. Charlie Adlard:

Well, for starters, let me say that the use of splash pages is in the script. So it's Robert being frugal with their use... not me.

Having said that, I totally agree with the way he approaches the comic, and, I too, wouldn't use the splash page unless I had to.

The splash page for me functions as a device to emphasize a moment or to show a BIG happening. That's it. Artists and writers have tended to overuse the technique in the last 15 years to showcase how great they are at drawing something or to put in reams and reams of dialogue with out bothering to break it up into panels... Heaven forbid, that might require storytelling!

If I'm pushed to single out an artist purely on their splash page abilities though - I'd have to say the great Sergio Toppi does it for me. There's a guy who can compose a beautiful full page panel... Can't tell a story to save his life, but, when you have images this amazing, and in total contrast to what I've just said, then I can forgive him that!

Charlie?! Christ... did you just compliment and bash a guy in the same breath? You brits are hardcore. I thought Andrew Lincoln was brutal, but sheesh!

2) Douglas' relationship with Rick is intriguing. His political past seems to serve him well in manipulating Rick to do his dirty work. Robert, is that what you were going for with those two?

Absolutely.

Stay Frosty,

Kyle Lemmon

By the way Kyle, when we call you 'Lemon,' we're not referring to comic genius Jack Lemon, we're referring to Tina Fey's fictional Liz Lemon from 30 Rock. That said, thanks for writing us, Lemon.

Kirkman,

I just got into twd about a month ago and I'm only a few issues away from being totally caught up. Utterly brilliant series so far. My only complaint is why why why why did you make Rick shave his beard in 69??? Seriously, bearded Rick is like the most badass person on the planet, without the beard he just seems so helpless. I mean when he first got shot he wasn't bearded and look what happened he ended up in a coma. Bearded Rick has beaten his hand until it was useless and then had said hand cut off, been shot and sucked it up, survived half of his family being massacred, taken a serious ass whooping from Tyreese (RIP), and seriously kicked a lot of ass. Please tell me it's coming back, Rick is like the White Rick Ross when he has his beard.

Rush1

Huh, that is actually an interesting point you bring up. Robert's characters with facial hair seem to be incredibly super strong, badass, and impervious to long term harm (Viltrumites, anyone?). Way to continue with the biblical themes, Samson Kirkman.

Rick's been rocking some sick sideburns lately. I wonder if the rule applies to mutton chops?

Only time will tell, Sina. Only time will tell.

Dear Walking Dead Folks,

This is my favorite comic book of all time. If I had to put my finger on what I loved best about it I would say that it's believable. Not the zombie part, the people part. The characters, what they say and do, what they feel, is believable. No one can go through what they have and be 'okay' in any sense of the word. Sometimes to survive we have to do things at the cost of our humanity. These guys have done that and it shows. These are damaged people who carry on as best as they can.

My first issue was 14, and I hunted down back issues and haven't missed a new one yet. I haven't done that since I was twelve. Damn fine job you guys do with this comic. If you haven't patted yourselves on the back, please take a moment and do so.

I have to confess that I am worried about Carl. I like Carl a great deal, but what he's gone through will surely mold him into a mad dog killer. Despite his remorse, he continues to see justification in what he did to Ben through his father and the community. That kid is on the train to psycho town.

That kid is on the train to Awesome Town, population: stud! It's funny that you all write to suggest Rick & co.

find a boat, or an arms specialist, or British people, but no one is like: “hey, did any child psychologists survive the apocalypse?”

Another matter or two...

If Rick and the others find themselves back in the open, I would suggest that they locate some firecrackers. Zombies are drawn to loud noises, a few black cats could be an excellent diversion. Speaking of loud noises, why has no one located a weapon with a silencer? They have them at my gun shop... A crossbow or hunting bow and arrows would eliminate the loud noise factor, and grant the characters range. Also, how come no flame thrower yet? Not that the lack of a flame thrower would deter me from reading these fine comics, but I bet Charlie could draw the hell out of some flaming roamers. Hey, a geek can dream.

Thanks again. Can't wait for the show.
-Chuck

Could you imagine the stink of dozens of burning roamers? Foul.

It would be a smell akin to old bacon. A smell as old as bacon.

Baby killer,

I would like to request more aliens and super hero TWD characters in issue 100 just to piss Axel R from Mexico off. He obviously doesn't pay much attention to the letters columns. I couldn't help but to laugh. It brought a nice sense of humor to a normally dark comic.

Hey! No fighting. Let's all just agree that Robert is a baby killer and keep the peace.

...(note that ellipsis is in italics.)

I would also like to let you know I have cable now just so I can watch TWD. I haven't had cable TV in 3+ years because I never watched it. I always watched movies or shows on the internet or DVD. You made me do this and I hate you for it. Even though I don't watch the AMC channel I love their shows. Breaking Bad is the shit. I've only seen a few episodes of Mad Men and it is amazing as well. By the way. If you go to their website and check out The Zombie Make-Up Photos... Picture 4 is undead Jim Carrey and pic 6 is undead Kevin Bacon.

Questions:

1: Are any of the characters you create based off of personalities you know in real life?

Robert works tirelessly to give his son the same issues that Carl has.

I like to joke that The Governor is based on Joe Quesada. But that's only a joke.

2: Why do you think people must insist on asking questions like: Why don't they find an island? My answer... It makes for a really boring Cast Away comic that has no zombies. So stop asking.

Well, let's not forget that Kirk-boss can make anything into an interesting story. Think about this story arc: Rick gets mad at a womanizer. Who'da thunk it would have been so awesome?

3: What if a tornado picked up zombies and threw them over the town's wall?

Then I would be reading the book out of pleasure instead of obligation!

4: Have you read World War Z or The Zombie Survival Guide yet? My guess is no. You're missing out.

Robert, wanna take this? I know the answer, but I don't want to speak for you...

Please do, I'm sick of answering this one.

In short: Robert knows there are too many similarities in what Max Brooks is doing and what is going on in The Walking Dead to read his books and say safely that he's not joking. Robert would prefer to keep his mind undiluted through the run of The Walking Dead. This is where he jokes "So when I'm done with The Walking Dead, I'll read World War Z, which is never."

5: You mentioned you failed in the creation of certain characters. Who?

Robert?

That would be telling... and I don't remember.

6: Do you mix any of your personal beliefs or political standings into your stories? I've noticed some things that could be taken that way. I think its just story though.

It is Robert's personal belief that Beef Jerky stroganoff is delicious.

7: Just for fun... What do you think is the most under-rated thing in life? My answer is a cold beer with a hot shower.

Robert?

Holy crap these are hard questions. Adult-sized footy pajamas? I mean... they're so under-rated they're not even commercially made (that I can find) but holy hell I bet they'd be the most comfortable clothes ever. I mean, it's the future god damn it... shouldn't we all be walking around in something silly looking and comfortable?

Thanks for sticking to your guns with no one-shots or spin offs. I used to really like Wolverine but Marvel has run him to the ground. Thus I don't buy it anymore. Crossovers I don't mind so much. But one-shots and spin offs can suck it.

Dan

I try to imagine a Walking Dead that Robert isn't writing, or if someone new was drawing. It just ends up feeling like an #epicfail in my head.

Hello Mr Kirkman!

Long time reader of your masterpiece The Walking Dead, but just one question. Do you have any plans of making side stories or one shots pertaining to Walking Dead? Maybe some stories about the many groups Rick and company have ran into along the way? Keep up the amazing work and can't wait for the tv show to air

- Thomas Hughes

Thomas, how interesting that you ask this immediately after Dan applauded Robert for NOT spinning off and telling tangential stories! What strange timing (or placement by the editor).

The closest thing fans will be getting to an expansion on The Walking Dead comic book universe is through the trilogy of novels coming out in 2011 through St. Martin's press. Robert will be plotting the stories, and horror maestro Jay Bonansinga will be killing it, so to speak.

Once we have more details, you Hacks will be the first to find out!

Hey Guys! Loving the series as per usual. This morning I had a little free time and wrote a little something I'd like to share. Looking forward to the TV show.

I flipped on the TV early this morning
Just in time to see the final warning
It's too much to take so I laid in bed
Tonight I am hiding from the Walking Dead

Every turn I make could be my last
I can't stay here long so make it fast
No place safe like the newsman said
Tonight I am running from the Walking Dead

We must adapt as the old ways are gone
Hurry up now we got to keep moving on
So sit with me tonight and share this bread
Tonight I am living with the Walking Dead

You are my friend and I ask only of you
To do the thing that you know you must do
Please just put a bullet in my bloody head
Tonight I am eating with the Walking Dead

Hope all is well. Love, love, love the direction the series is heading. Count me in for at least another 80 issues. Hope Halloween is extra good to you all.

Thanks,

Jason Hart
Tulsa, Oklahoma

This made my day, my week, my month.

Poems?! Damn.

Dear The Walking Dead crew,

I've never written to a comic book before, but there's a first time for everything. I just finished issue 76 and I'm quite impressed. I'm actually surprised Rick is still inside. I guess that's what I like about this series - I'm never certain what's going to happen. As I get older I read less comics and I'll admit I just discovered TWD about six months ago (voraciously reading the graphic novels and spending a good portion of my tax return on them), but your book makes me interested in comics again. It's that good.

There are two things I'd like to address and hopefully I'll see my little letter on the Letter Hacks page, but I won't hold my breath.

1. A letter from DMC (is he too chickenshit to put his name?) annoyed me. I understand you think the book's slow, but it's an ongoing series about people living after a zombie apocalypse, not the zombie apocalypse itself. Real life isn't very exciting - today I read the last few TWD issues, played with my cats, played drums for a while, and read some more. I also watched last week's Mad Men. Usually nothing exciting happens in our lives; Kirkman's writing reflects this sometimes. Personally, I think a great deal happens in this book, even when zombies aren't killing or getting killed. Also, saying Adlard's, "crude and simplistic art doesn't keep the story afloat," is an asinine statement. His art is spectacular; just what this book needs. Adlard picks up the emotion in each character's face perfectly, which is much more important than seeing the undead torn to shreds in a Todd McFarlane fashion. Sorry he isn't Rob Liefeld...thankfully (although Liefeld's artwork in "What If?" issue 7 is amazing).

Dudes are entitled to their opinions.

And speaking of Rob Liefeld, is anyone else checking out Zombie Jesus?

Rob is the bomb, anyone who doesn't think so can bite the bobo!

2. This is a silly thought my friends and I had in high school: wouldn't the zombies start decomposing after a while? I remember the zombies were slowed down by winter weather in the early graphic novels, so why doesn't the sun make them rot? I'm not knowledgeable in the details of bodily decomposition, but I'm sure bringing this up could end the series before its prime. Nobody, but possibly DMC, wants that. I'd like this series to continue until I'm in an assisted living facility, which seems more like TWD than anything else.

I think we covered this last letters column: sometimes you need a little suspension of disbelief when it comes to keeping a corpse alive. Also: people still keep getting bit and killed off around the world, there are new zombies sprouting up.

Keep doing what you're doing, and I'll keep parting with my somewhat hard earned cash. Just please keep Andrea alive. She's my favorite character and reminds me of my girlfriend, who thought your book was sexist. It's OK though, I told her I thought Judith Butler was too feminist. =)

E. Malchiodi

Yeah, your girlfriend should break it down with Feminist Studies major Sarah Wayne Callies, who has a thing or two to say about a woman's agency in a post-apocalyptic zombie world. No joke.

P.S.: You guys have a lot to live up to with the AMC series. Mad Men and Breaking Bad are incredible shows, which set the bar pretty high for that network. I'm hoping TWD television series can keep up. I'm confident it can.

Robert's cool, he can handle the heat.

Also, so far at least, The Walking Dead is killing those two TV gems in the ratings... which is pretty crazy.

Mr Kirkman/Ms Grace

Yeesh.

Given that the tv series looks like being a success are you Robert going to be able to juggle future involvement on both TV & comic? I thought Y The Last Man was brilliant but the shipping & storyline seemed to diminish in brilliance once BKV got involved with Lost - admittedly different stories but the comic to TV step...

That's why Ms. Grace is here, to keep Robert on track with the greatest comic books ever. Tyler Shainline at Image calls me Ms. Grace, but he knows I'm a dude...

Issue #77 - I'm getting a sense of foreboding for what's ahead. This in spite of death & decay & devastation that courses through the book. I think that's impressive storytelling to make me feel that way & why TWD remains first read when shipped.

I have 2 requests in return for my continuing expenditure on this franchise:

1.Don't kill Andrea EVER

No deal.

2. I believe you previously confirmed in Letter Hacks, Capes #1 was the "1st" appearance of Walking Dead (the preview) - what's the print run on that book? As I'm asking, what was the print run on TWD #1?

Uff-da, I have no clue about Capes, but The Walking Dead was something like 7K for the first printing, right Robert K?

Yeah, and Capes is very similar. Maybe 6K. those were the days... I had no money to spend so I spent all my time writing letters columns.

Here's hoping the moving pictures capture what you manage on the page.

Kind regards

Theo Crush
London
England

I like all of this speculative optimism now that we've already seen episodes of the show. Relax, dudes! The show is good!

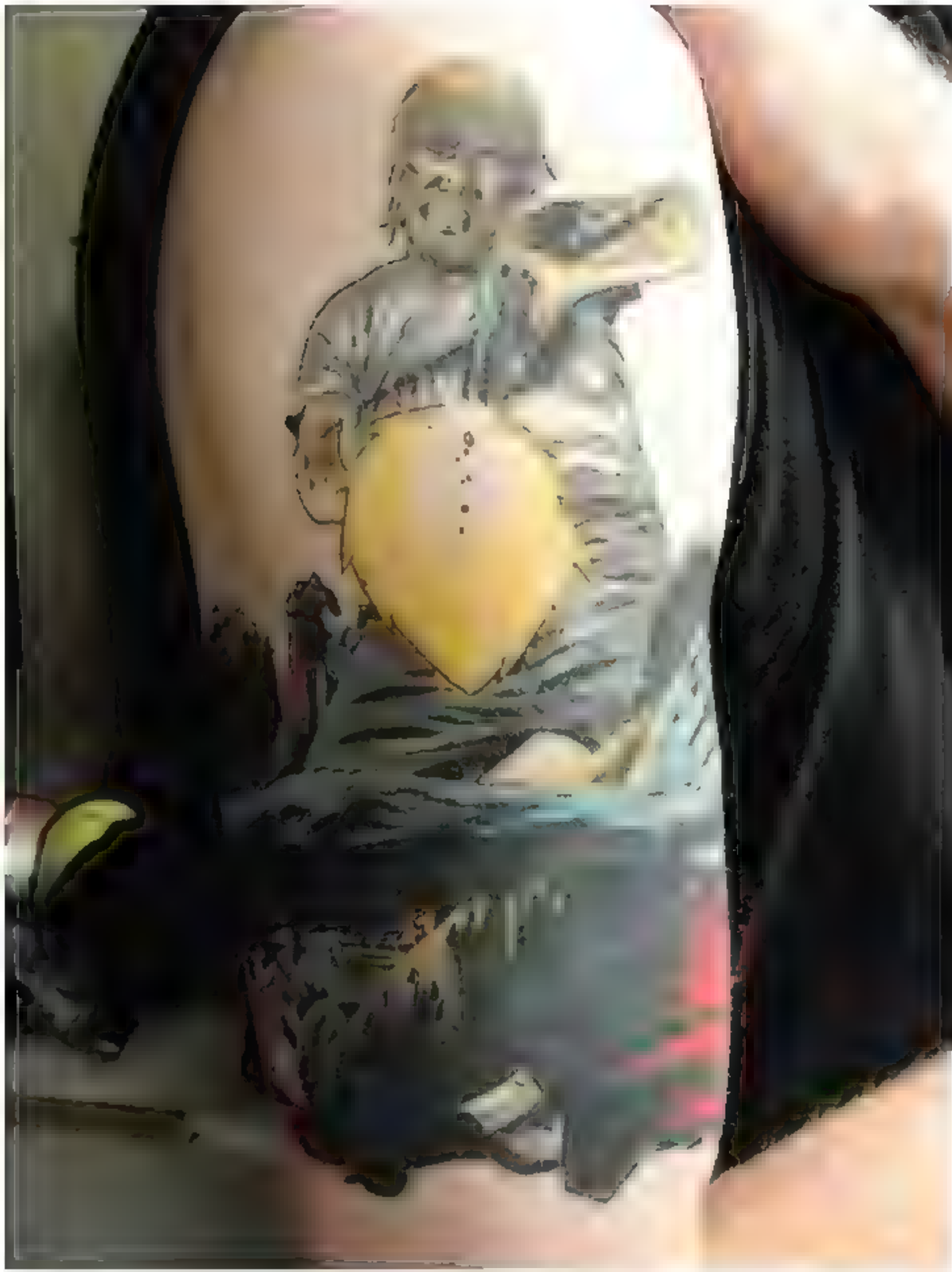
To everyone at TWD,

Thanks for making one of the greatest comics ever. I sent you a couple of pics of my tattoo of Rick from issue 60. Since that picture was taken I've gotten two more pieces done on what will be a sleeve, next is Carl. If this actually makes it into the book I wanted to say what's up to Gary from the inkwell (he does the ink) and my boy Sasso over at Dark Tower Comics in Newburgh NY. Anyway thanks again and keep on doing what you're doing.

Adam Kooperman
Newburgh, NY

Oh yeah Invincible is fucking awesome too!

Man, this guy knows how to write fan mail! Compliment the book, show off hardcore fandom, shout out to his peeps, AND give Invincible props? In five sentences! Good work, Adam. And your tattoo is sick.



Yeah... let's print that thing!

Hello,

I just purchased "The Walking Dead: The Covers" hardback and I was wondering why the Erik Larsen cover wasn't included in this collection.

Thanks,
Ryan

We decided to keep the book about Charlie and Tony, and the genesis of the series covers. While that variant cover is amazing, and we all loves us some Erik Larsen, it would have been a strange addition to the collection, and fits better as a collector's item to be sought out.

Next month, Rick grows a beard and becomes impervious to criticism.

If you live in the states and haven't been able to check out the TV show yet, go download episodes on iTunes! While we're on the topic of plugging The Walking Dead miscellany, check out the following ad for Walking Dead "human" target prints, featuring art by some amazing artists. They're limited, they're signed, and they're sick. Thanks Secret Headquarters for collaborating on such a cool concept!

Grah,

-Sina Grace

BYE!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, it's a hit.

The show on AMC received astounding ratings, and lots of love from all of you. Thanks! Robert's already in cahoots with Frank to make season 2 beyond belief. Let's hope that 2011 is as fantastic of a year as 2010!

I can't really gloss over this... THE WALKING DEAD on AMC is the highest rated drama on cable television. That's kind of a big deal. I want to thank each and every one of you for tuning in (assuming you did) and spreading the word about the show (assuming you did) this was a big win for comics in general and it looks like we'll be seeing a lot more comics-based television shows in the future. Exciting times. -Robert

For any new readers we've picked up: This is Walking Dead-itor Sina Grace answering fan mail with King Kirkman himself (he'll be in italics).

Like this!

Letters for the premiere started coming in, and there are a lot of new voices, so let's give you folks the stage...

Hang on a sec. Let me reread that one real quick.

Ok. Back.

Hey, Listen, Kirk, Man, I been meanin' to tell you how much I love your comic. Here comes the obligatory I haven't written a letter to a comic in many years -- in fact, I think I only ever did three total, two to Cerebus that got published, one to Micronauts or something -- ha ha.

You are a man of discernible tastes, to say the least.

Ever since one Christmas holiday back in Alabama after a visit to the local comic shop where I purchased first one, then another, then another, then another of your volumes, I have often thought about writing a few comments. The end of Volume 11 was one -- Carl's confession was incredibly poignant, especially coming after what Rick and the others had done.

And I must say I wasn't really expecting much from the end of this most recent "volume," issue 78 -- but it really floored me; I was on the edge of my seat (or even, as I said, on the floor) throughout.

Keep reading, the next couple of issues will continue doing just that!

Rick's characterization from page to page was incredibly layered, as was that of many of the other characters -- even with just one panel of Sophia, so much was conveyed.

I like the way that each page seemed to be almost a separate entity, and managed to impart so much information and depth of story. The few two-page-ish spreads, like the one at the funeral, the shootout at the gate, were gripping.

Rick's speech was so on-point, and then who wouldn't expect his negotiation to be even smoother -- heck, we was on a roll!

Based on the cover, I was afraid Andrea would be hanky-panky on the job and let those rovers through, which would in turn lead to the zombies getting through -- I'd glad you had our guys soundly defeat them (though they've summoned something much worse) -- It's nice when you surprise us with how Badass Rick and crew can be.

I wonder if Douglas will make it out before the herd comes.

Anyway, nice work all around.

And Congratulations on the TV show! I'm thoroughly excited -- made my roomie/landlord get cable in the living room, and now we're making the place more swank, less dank.

That's Skybound's slogan for 2011! More Swank, Less Dank. Skybound.

I'm writing that down.

Ripped up carpet today, discovered massive colony of black mold underneath -- it was like killing zombies.

Yours in Comics for Perpetuity or at least till issue 300
Wes.

Thank you so much for your support, Wes! Now go and tell your roomie landlord to start picking up the book, too. Just tell him that your copies got mold all over them!

Hi, Kirkman:

Some time ago, I had a job and money. I went to a comic shop and thought about giving The Walking Dead a chance, so I bought the first trade. (now I become unoriginal and predictable) Before the end of the week I went back and bought the (then only) other 4 TPBs.

I'm liking the story so far...

After that there was not much time for the 6th TPB to be published. And then I waited 6 months for the 7th and other six months for the 8th. Then I couldn't stand it anymore and I subscribed to the monthly.

Liking it, seeing it...

Then I moved to another city and I couldn't keep all my comics. Foolishly sentimentalism was stronger than quality. I decided that I would keep my older superhero comics and I would give the others to a jobless friend that shared my hobby. So I gave him all The Walking Dead TPBs and single issues.

I can sort of get behind that...

I kept buying The Walking Dead every month and then sending it to him. I regretted giving him the whole series. And then I lost my job and couldn't keep on buying as many comics as I would like. But this time I kept buying The Walking Dead, kept them for myself since they arrived to the community (pretty recently, I know) and decided that, as soon as I could, I would be buying all the back issues; not TPB, single issue comics.

Oh this is where the story gets all uplifting...

Now, I knew some would be hard to find and some would be expensive. I have a whole life to get them all. So...

Thank you, thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. Yeah, is not the same as a first edition, but the weekly is good enough. Please, keep the weekly schedule until issue 69. The "Fear the Hunters" issues are hard to find. Thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. thank you. ... and, as a manner of ending, those old superhero comics (most of them, anyway) ended being given away... since I stopped finding them amusing. C'est la vie.

No! Not the X-Tinction Agenda!!!!

See you soon.
Paco Gonzalez

Dear Paco, thanks for loving us and supporting the Walking Dead Weekly in advance (you all heard we're doing that every week in 2011, right? It's gonna be awesome).

Yeah, we should have talked about that at the top... oh, well, this will be for people who actually read the whole letters column! Starting the first week of January... we're going to run all the way through 2011 republishing this series as WALKING DEAD WEEKLY, which is actually something Cerebus did back in the '80s. Every week a new issue and we're going to be including the original letters columns... so you'll be able to relive all that stuff, too. Pretty cool!

Hey Sina and Robert.

Last Wednesday I read Kickass 2 #1, and after that fun little jaunt, I turned to TWD #78, and I was less than enthusiastic to start it. Kick ass is just so exciting, right? Fuck that. 78 blew me away. Afterwards I was silent. One of the greatest issues of any comic book I've ever read. Character development. Touching monologues about human nature. Snipers shooting other snipers. More shooting. Zombies. Watershed moments of leadership change. I will hesitantly say that I'd gotten a bit bored by the last few issues, but I am certainly no longer.

Last Wednesday also happens to be the last time I'll buy comics for a while, as I'm currently, uh, in between jobs... but I've decided that TWD will be worth throwing down \$3 a month for. Also, with the show coming up and all, I don't think I'll be able to stay away. Thanks, AMC (now home to the THREE greatest shows on TV today).

I hate you all, Rubicon was amazing... why didn't you all watch it?! AMC was home to FOUR awesome shows. Sigh.

Right-o, so I'm into keeping up with the styles and fashions around here, so not only will I do numbered questions, but I'll point out that I'm going to do numbered questions first. #alsoi'lldosomeofthese,whateverthefucktheyare.

I love that this guy even formatted our name at the top of the letter #truededication

#Ialsothinkit'sfunnythathedoesn'tknowwhathashtagsare #probablyolderthanthirty

1: Do you get sick of people giving you ideas for the comic?

If yes, see question 3. If no, see question 2.

Robert? I always think they’re kind of fun, and it’s always interesting to see which ideas are trending. If I had the time, I would even mark on a map where each suggestion comes from, to see if there’s some kind of correlation. Like, people in the north-most regions of Canada all want there to be a character struggling with an eating disorder.

It doesn’t bug me, I’m happy to hear what people want to see. I prefer it when it’s in the form of a guess rather than a request... because I don’t take requests. You can ask for things all day long but I never do what people ask unless I was already planning on doing it. Also, when people say things like “I’ve been watching LOST all week and you should do stuff like that, y’know... more polar bears!” That’s annoying.

Still, though... any sign that a reader is engaged in what you’re doing is a good thing. So while I may admit to being a tad boring, it could be worse... you guys could not CARE what comes next.

2: In the letters page(s) in 78 someone said more zombies, gore, action, etc. Ignore this. More talking, more characters. If this is the plan, skip question 3 and move on to question 4. If not, see question 3.

I think there’s a good mix of both going on in “No Way Out.”

I’m having trouble following this.

3: More decapitations, please? Also, a spread of someone getting ripped apart at the stomach, guts strung out in the hands and teeth of hungry undead? #doitcharlie

When Charlie won’t, the show will.

True dat.

4: How are they still getting clean water?

Tobin used to work at a desalination plant.

The community has a separate water system that is still functional, part of the solar powered system that gives them electricity. It’s something the government set up in the case of catastrophe.

5: I really don’t have another question, just need enough of these to justify numbering.

Fair enough.

Annoying.

6: Did I do enough cool shit to get printed? numbers? #ing? saying things I didn’t like about the comic? referencing other comics and other AMC shows? saying I’d continue to by TWD even when I’m unemplo--between jobs? Making jokes about being unemployed? If not, I’ve attached a picture of a cat.

-Jeff,
Bellingham, WA

Jeff, you truly wrote a great fan letter with some fun questions, hard-hitting questions, and mainly you hash-tagged a storm. My New Year’s resolution is to never hash tag in this lettercol again.

Is it not cool anymore? I can’t keep up with young people!

Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you for writing the Walking Dead. Your work impacts people in ways you probably never imagined. A few years ago, a friend of mine suggested that I read the first TPB and I was completely blown away. I was so inspired by what I read that I became determined to write my own comic. Two years later, I’ve done just that. Because of you, there is a two hundred page comic script sitting in front of me. We’ve had numerous setbacks with artists, but are determined to see it through. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Kirkman!

-Tyler

P.S. Just watched the first TWD episode on AMC. Kudos to the entire cast, but the guy who plays Morgan killed it. Glad we get to see him again (assuming Darabont doesn’t decide otherwise).

Dude, congrats on writing such a massive graphic novel! I’m nervous about your switching from “I” to “we” regarding your book and its setbacks. Maybe if you would stop going schizophrenic halfway through production, you wouldn’t lose so many artists! And in all seriousness: Lennie James KILLS. If I was a producer on the show (what do you think, Robert?), I would bring Morgan back. Just saying.

I’d certainly love to see him again...

Kirk-ocalypse, Sina, Mr. Adlard, and others,

I never thought I would write a letter to the back of a comic book, you can claim another first timer on your bedpost. I’ve been on board since issue 13 and I burn for answers.

A younger Sina would have made a remark about your burning issue. But the new year is essentially upon us, and I will not take the low road.

Congratulations for continuing to make the best comic in history. Congratulations for having the most successful show in 2010: 8.1 Million viewers on Halloween. Kirkman, you and your team deserve all this and more. From the first time I cracked open issue one to the fifth time I’ve read issue 75, I salute you.

That being said: on to questions...

1) Sina, I love what you’ve brought to Letter Hacks, and I think you have a real talent for editing and choosing appropriate letters and responses. I don’t want to sound like a job interview, but where do you see yourself in five years? Your own comic? Ruler of the world?

Thanks, but you guys are the ones writing the awesome letters and sending them over. In five years, I hope to still be as excited to work in comics as I am now.

And that, as the French would say, is formaggi.

2) Kirk-master, when will you hurt us again? Please say soon. The emotional

events around issue 50 have worn off, and we are ready to have something shiny taken away from us. Your no-holds-barred style is unique to the genre, heck, it’s rare in the entirety of the written word. I hope you will keep delivering the hotness for a thousand and more issues.

I think this issue may have been some good hurt.

3) My mother was born in Lexington and I was born in Point Pleasant, WV. How has living in KY and the surrounding area shaped your understanding of the world, and how do you think it impacts The Walking Dead? After moving further south, I find I’m still very partial to people in the KY/WV area (good people).

Robert? I feel like you’ve answered this somewhere, but I can’t keep track!

Huh? I don’t know how to answer this really. I think most places are the same. All places have really really smart people and really really dumb people and good people and bad people. I don’t think my region affects my understanding of the world as much as my upbringing and education... and that can happen anywhere. I think the only thing that really came from me living in Kentucky is the fact that I kind of hate being in large cities. I prefer being out in the woods.

Let me know if a lawyer position opens up at Image, I’d totally dig working for you guys.

Sincerely,

Ira Knight

(Sina, if this goes live, please edit freely. I trust you completely!)

Ira, I don’t censor.

Dearest Robert,

I hope you get this letter. I hope you read this letter. I hope you print this letter. I hope you answer my questions, thoughts, and prayers. You might remember me from issue 40. I’m the independent filmmaker that sent you an email about wanting to make “The Walking Dead” into a movie. Well, I watched the show last night. It was really, truly incredible. I loved it!!! I am definitely not worthy. I thought I wasn’t going to like all of the additions and changes to the original source material, but I really, really did. How did you feel about them?

He could take it or leave it. #sokidding

Ha! I knew you couldn’t resist!

I love the show... LOVE IT. Do a google search, I talk about it... well, all day every day it seems. There are plenty of interviews out there.

Great! I’m glad you liked them!!! How did I know you were going to say that?!

Anyway, here’s the thing: I work for a news station here in Northwest Arkansas making local commercials. Sometimes I get to make pretty neat spots, but for the most part I get clients that say, “I want something original! But I also wanna say that I’m family owned and operated and that...um...we’s been in business since God was a baby! Oh, I also wanna show my dog and my grandkids.”

I hope you can see the absolute hell that I’m in...

That said: Please, I’m begging you! Give me a chance! I’ll pull cable. I’ll get you and Mr. Darabont coffee. I’ll log shots. I’ll even clean zombie goo with my tongue. <--- I really will! I just want to be there! I want to be a part of it, in anyway I can. I’m not joking. I have a dream, and so far it hasn’t really worked out for me, but I’m a super hard worker, I’m hungry to learn, I have a good head on my shoulders, and I’m pretty good at what I do. I know I’m begging, but I also know that you know what it’s like to have a dream. It’s hard! There’s constant rejection, and dissolution, and you just sit there and wonder, “When is it going to happen? Am I just doomed to a life of mediocrity?” I don’t know. Maybe the answer is yes. But Robert, I give you my word that if you just give me a chance to prove myself, you won’t regret it. Thanks for reading, for printing, and hopefully for the job. :)

Sincerely,

Chuck Meré

Chuck, we can’t get you a job cleaning dried blood off the rooftops of Atlanta (wait, really, we can’t?), but here’s a bit of advice: find time to make something unique for yourself that will reach outside of Arkansas, and I’m sure an opportunity will arise. Robert didn’t do Battle Pope as a gig for someone else, but rather to have something that would reflect his own aspirations.

Actually, he did it because he thought it would be cool, but you know, same diff. Follow your dreams, the end!

What Sina said!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Firstly, I just watched the premiere of the TV show, and I’ve got to say, it was everything I could have hoped for. I’m not exactly clear on how much input you had with the episode. Whether it was your doing or Frank Darabont’s doing, it was very faithful to the comics with just the right amount of healthy detours in the layout of the story. Well done.

Secondly, this is my first time writing and I don’t know how likely it is that I’ll get to the letters column, but I wanted to say that I am probably Ireland’s biggest fan of TWD (Yes, IRELAND). Since I started reading, I’ve been amazed at your ability to express character growth and interaction. The story hasn’t focused on the zombies themselves or how or why the whole mess started; that, I’m sure, is one of the main reasons that it has gone on so long and continues to gain recognition. (OK, I think I’m done licking your arse...)

Do you people honestly refer to them as arses? Or do you do this to make me giggle?

Lastly, there’s something that’s been worrying me about the TV show. Do you think it’s the best thing to have added the new characters. I’ve been noticing that there are a few newbies thrown into the mix, and I for one don’t think it’s a very good idea. They story is pretty much perfect as it is and adding extra people might upset the balance of all those relationships that made the comics

so great! Again, I don't know how much of this is your doing or Frank's but anyway, I'd like to know what you think. (Here's hoping the newbies die early in the series!!!)

Anywhoo,

Thanks for possibly reading this,
David Mahady.

David, I've got two words for you: DARYL. DIXON. Don't get me wrong about Merle and the other new characters... they rock. But if Norman Reedus hasn't made you question your sexuality, then it must mean you're already gay.

It's true.

Not sure if I should send this question here to the comic mail or somehow find a e-mail address for the TV show. Anyway, with most TV shows involving children and having not a lot of time pass in them, but having years go by season wise, but only a year or so pass in the actual show itself, children age. Have the producers and everyone else thought of this? The only example I can think of is LOST. Walt was written off at the end of season 2 due to the actor growing faster than the rate of the show. What's gonna happen when the actor playing Carl no longer looks 7, much less the other kids in the series. Love the series although do you even have any idea when it's gonna end? Cause I don't think you do. An over thinking reader.

Andrew Walden

It's called botox, Andrew, and there are no laws against injecting minors with it.

I want to start off the same way everyone else does, by kissing your ass and tell you how great your comics are and what fun I have reading them. Your letter hacks are great; I love reading stuff from the mail bag, and hope to see this letter in print.

With that out of the way, I wanted to move on to some more pressing matters, the questions!

1) Why aren't survivors' utilizing more animals? Dogs are easy to train and I am surprised no group we have encountered some far had been using them as distractions or for finding food. They could be a great benefit while hunting as well.

Animals are upkeep. Animals are noise. Animals are work. The only animals that would be perfect for a zombie apocalypse would be a wolf and an owl. But that makes no sense.

2) I liked the prison, too bad the damn governor smashed down the fence and ruined such a nice place. Did you have it planned that the group would fall apart like it did, with Dale and Andrea leaving in the RV and Tyreese and Michonne running off half cocked? If they would have taken a little bit of time to plan, they could have loaded the RV up with some grenades. It just seemed like it could have worked out for them a lot better and the opportunity was missed.

Robert?

I don't understand the question. You think the characters could have fought back the Governor's forces and stayed in the prison? Maybe... but they didn't. What happened, happened... and of course I had it planned, I don't write this stuff on the fly. I know exactly where (almost) every plot thread is going at all times!

3) Will the series lead us back to a core group? I really liked the dynamic you created at the prison, far better than any other part of the story (other than rick going crazy!). It felt really right, not to big not to small, just enough danger to keep you on the edge of your seat.

If you're only up to the compendium, then there's an answer waiting for you. If you're asking about trimming the size down to the characters existing pre-Community, well, there may not be many survivors left after this arc!

4) I guess this is a suggestion/hope more than a question, but I would love to see this happen, Carl takes over as the lead character, instead of Rick, who I am sure at some point will die, you have shown us so much character growth in Carl it amazes me. Anyway, I am sure you get that a lot, my point isn't about Carl, so much as it's where he lives and who he is able to keep safe. I think that a Zoo would be perfect. Like a prison, but less desirable to other groups, I mean who is going to go to the Zoo when the world ends? Plus then you could have people train lions to tear up the undead! Not to mention you could eat some endangered species! I thought it kind of made sense because in a way, people in the world of The Walking Dead, have become an endangered species.

This is the first time I've seen a zoo suggestion. What about you, Robert?

The only thing that smells worse than a zombie is a zoo.

I will say that enough from me... for now. Keep up the good work, I am always read to hand my money over for your amazing material. Congrats on the TV show btw, it is awesome!

MH from AZ

AZ, eh? You better be hitting us up at the Amazing Arizona Comic-Con in January! It's Robert's first con appearance of 2011, and he'll be there with Jon Bernthal (Shane), Steven Yeun (Glenn), Invincible's Cory Walker and Ryan Ottley, and even yours truly!

Don't miss it!!

Dear Robert Kirkham,

I am writing today after having completed reading issue 78. Despite the "quickness" of the issue (I read a preview online which probably makes it seem a hell of a lot faster a read) this issue was thoroughly enjoyable. Please give Rick his mechanical arm back, the stump haunts me.

He's going to be getting a Tech Jacket in issue 100.

If you don't know what a Tech Jacket is, feel free to order the TPB at your local retailer... it's a good book... I swear!

I have a question about the zombies, where do their lips go? Is that the first thing they devour? Will you ever feature a cover which actually has something to do with the contents of your books? Are the majority of the zombies now bald? How do zombies see without pupils and irides? If you die in the Walking Dead

do you die in the real world? Does the Walking Dead alien mini-series take place within the Science Dog universe? What ever happened to the man of tomorrow? Are you actually Zach Galifianakis?

Chow, your fan, Bernie.

Wow... Robert, please answer ALL of the above.

They recede, same as on dead bodies. No, they just kind of rot back a little. We already do that from time to time. This cover for instance, and last issue's cover. It seems that way, they look cooler like that. Magic. Yup. It will. He died. I wish (not really).

PS: Print my letter or I'll blow up the moonie moon moon.

EEP! DONE.

Hi Kirkman and Sina

I got really scared with those upcoming zombie hordes threatening the safety of the community. I really didn't wanted to see this place destroyed and all the characters I learned to like and admire (specially Glenn, Andrea and Eugene) meeting their deaths.

Since I cannot control Mr. Kirkman's plans for TWD, I would like at least to give one small contribution to the general survival effort. If the community is to be overrun, at least don't make this happen without the proper resistance. I mean FIERCE resistance!

The sketch below is the first version of one zombie killer machine that can be made out of simple materials like iron pipes, wood/metal poles, chains and stones. The stones should reach the average height of an human head (between 5 and 6 feet from the ground). This should be enough to crush most of the zombies' skulls.

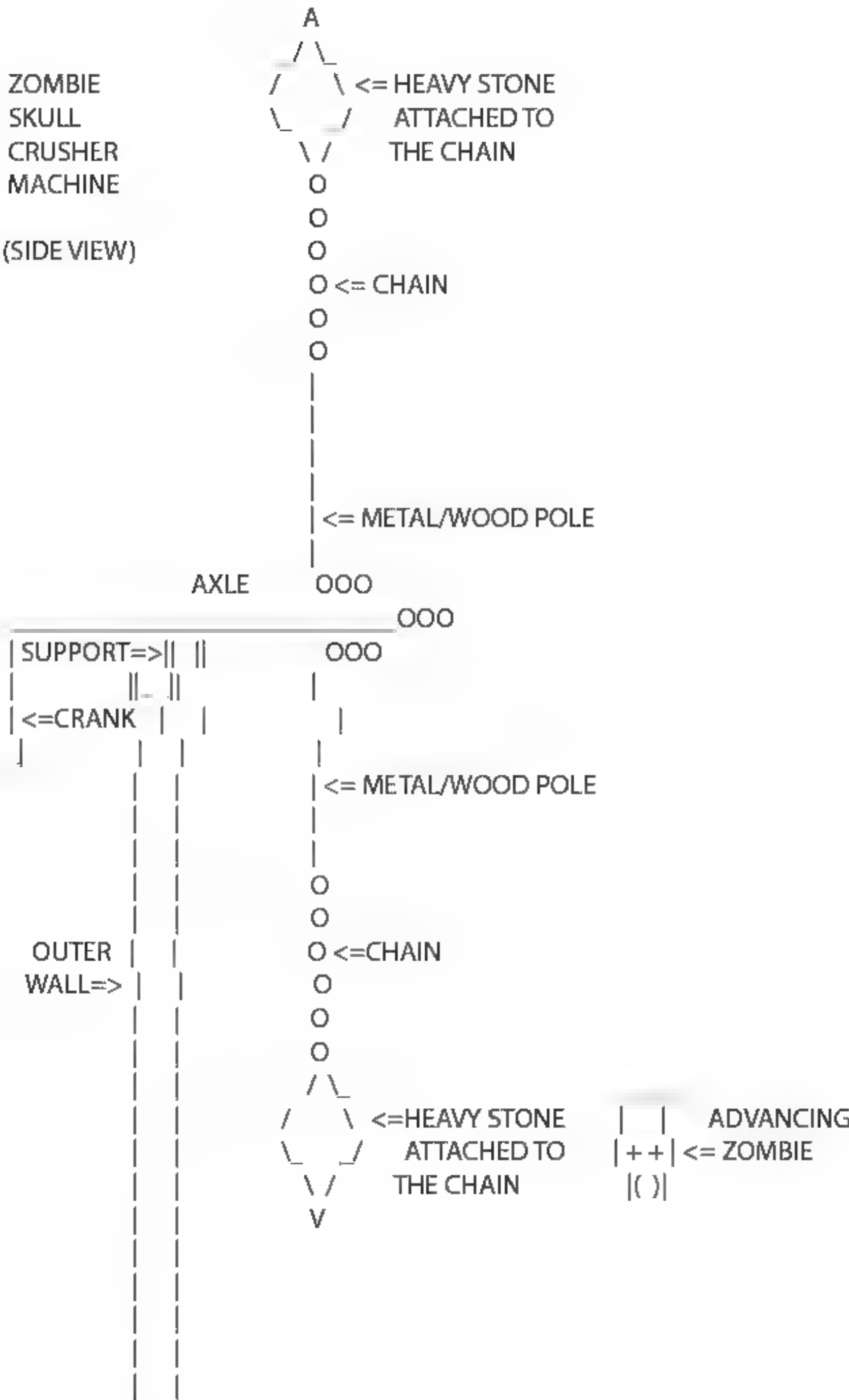
The device should be mounted in several places along the outer wall or in the top of some kind of moving tower,that could be dragged along it. Assembling several of these machines in the window openings of a bus or another big vehicle and drive through the horde wouldn't be a bad idea either. If several machines are built in this way, they can be connected to an electric motor, saving muscles and fighters.

I'm sure that Eugene would be able to put it to work, and even improve it!

Regards.

Joao Paulo Vilas Boas

HOW TO OPERATE: Turn the crank quickly enough to make the stones gain speed



and wait for the zombie to come close.

What you did Joao, redefines FTW.

That device would be effective against a zombie that stood in one particular section of the wall around the community. I don't know how mobile it would be and if it's not mobile at all... that would be a giant waste of time. It'd be much more effective to make a flail... and lean over the wall yourself and bash zombie brains in... so... y'know... FAIL!

That's all the space we have this month. Thanks so many of you for writing in for the very first time! Keep sending us your thoughts about the comic, the show, the state of the economy, and we'll keep printing them!

Shuffling about like a walker,

-Sina Grace

Oh, we didn't mention that the show was on the cover of Entertainment Weekly! How cool was THAT?! WHAT?!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

No Way Out: no way to not enjoy it!

What's the news, Walking Dead Heads. Editor Sina Grace, here. I'm gonna shut up because we only have two pages this issue for your words.

Without further ado, thoughts on issue 79, and more feelings about the Golden Globe _____ show...

Oh, that's cool, you're leaving it blank so you can later fill in "nominated" or "winning." Nice.

Yeah, I should plug in "NOMINATED," but this here banter is priceless. Thanks to everyone at AMC for showing The Walking Dead a good time that evening!

This is for the chance of Image making a number of spin-offs from The Walking Dead series. There are a number of stories that will easily flow out of the characters that have already been created, I would personally love the chance to write one of these spin-offs and will only be done at your request, so yeah please request it. I already have an artist for the series.

The way I see it, all the fans want more from this series to read, personally I would love to read more from this world and I'm sure that a large number of other fans has the idea as well. That's what has me here typing now, even if I'm not given the chance to work on it, I at least want more of the comics to read, I'm stuck waiting for issue 80 to hit and to get on with the No Way Out storyline to begin.

There are so many different routes to take with this spin-off series, the back stories are already there, we just need to take them and run with it. Use the other characters from the series, Hell Michonne's story is a great one to be told, she could seriously have her own run and it would be interesting for the reader to see where the warrior woman came from.

There are just so many things that could be done with this series, it's a goldmine and I, personally for one would like to get in on the ground floor for this one. I would like to submit a spin-off issue; it takes place at the beginning of the outbreak. Please for the love of God please want to read it, if you'd like to see it, please let me know otherwise I'll keep it as a part of my own personal fan fiction and not have the artwork done up for it. Come on you know you want to say yes, you know you want to pay for a great new story that will make money, the way I see it Zombies are the shit right now and I love the hell out of them, they're my bread and butter and they can surely bring in the cheese. MMMMM!!! Bread, Butter, Cheese. Ha BBC I like British people, Is anyone else horny.

Roger Moore

What are your thoughts, Robert?

This letter is awesome. Unfortunately, we're not taking submissions for spin-offs, and I still maintain that there will never be spin-offs for this series, aside from things like the upcoming The Walking Dead: Survivor Guide sourcebook thing. On the other hand, any letter that arbitrarily asks if someone is horny... well, that's just solid gold.

Dear Walking Dead crew,

I just wanted to thank you for helping me rediscover my love for comic books. I'm a new fan, never knew about the comic until the TV series started. The first two episodes of the show were cool enough, but I remained skeptical - how long can the topic of zombies possibly remain interesting? After all, you can't keep showing people running away from corpses season after season without it getting redundant. Eventually they will surely have to change the course, maybe take the Resident Evil-route and make it all about some perverse corporation doing experiments which sooner or later result in grotesque giant monsters that make regular zombies look harmless. (Great idea for video games but in other media this fan gets fed up fairly quickly.)

At least that was my take on it before I got my hands on the comic books. When I did I immediately got hooked and my whole "plain zombies can't stay interesting forever"-theory went right out the window. I have since caught up and recently finished issue 79 (in the process spending money I probably should have saved for my wife's Christmas present) and am eager for the next issue. I haven't been this much into a comic book since I thought Spider-Man was the greatest thing ever when I was twelve. I usually don't like fan letters that say nothing but how awesome the product is, but here I find myself doing the same thing. No constructive criticism, I got nothing, not on the comic book anyway. Keep doing what you're doing. You rule.

This praise can't last for too much longer...

On TV episode 4 was a bit of a downer, what with the whole lame retirement

facility and all. I couldn't quite follow the logic in many parts of that plot (why did they kidnap Glenn again?). If only they stayed as close to the comic as possible there wouldn't be that much they could do wrong. Still, they didn't stray as far as, say, Legend of the Seeker did from the wonderful Sword of Truth books (Oh my God, am I ever glad they cancelled that show! But I digress.). It's certainly not a deal breaker. I'll keep watching!

Them's fighting words. Did you not catch who wrote that episode?

You can't please everyone.

Bottom line, you're awesome and I hope the TV show will be successful and bring many more fans like myself to read the comic books so the series can run for a long time to come.

Cheers,
Ben

Me too, these letters only get better and better, Robert. So keep striking while the iron's hot! #SuperDinosaur

For those who may not be in the know, Super Dinosaur is a new series I'm doing with artist Jason Howard, debuting in April. Do please check it out... it's an all-ages title, so it'll be something you can pick up for your kid while you're buying this book every month. #shilling

Mr. Kirkman,

First of all congrats on everything. From the continuing success of both books and now the success of the Walking Dead TV series (I already pre-ordered the blu ray it's that damn good).

March 8th, folks! Pre-order on Amazon! Did I earn myself some free Mad Men and Breaking Bad DVDs, AMC?

I was curious on how much input you have in the series? I was skeptical when I first heard the series came out and it was going to be on AMC, but it's been proven after the first episode they aren't pulling punches just like the comic. Which was a relief, then I had to pick my jaw off the floor when I saw the extreme and how far the envelope they are willing to take it (again kudos to them).

Executive Producer. Look it up.

I saw that you had written the 4th episode, which kicked it up a notch in the intensity. Plans on doing more next season?

Robert?

If it doesn't interfere with the comic, yes. I will probably end up writing at least one episode in season 2.

Now I know you are a huge fan of Spiderman. What is your opinion of the current state of the character? Do you like the reset then the tangled mess that it is currently? Personally I will only be reading Spiderman again if Joey Q just hands over the title to you. Honestly.

Robert?

Hah, thankfully I think the title is safe in the AMAZING hands of Dan Slott... and if you think I'd do a good Spider-Man then you really should check out Dan's current run because he and I have always been like-minded on what makes a good Marvel comic. So I think you'll enjoy what Dan's doing.

Lastly will we see another Omnibus/Oversized HC collection come out? I have the first two and have gone back a few times and just re-read them. Plans for a vol. 3 anytime in the future?

Thanks!

Josh Norman

The next Oversized HC will be out by the time you see this letter printed, and the next Compendium will come out shortly after we print issue 96! (Remember folks, it's a 48 issue collection, you can do the math yerself).

Dedicated reader writing in for the first time. I just finished issue 79 and I am excited for No Way Out. I especially enjoyed the snow since it hits home for me. I could never see enough zombie survival in winter. On that note, have you seen Pontypool?

I noticed that the first snowfall was in issue 5 which ends in line with the latest episode 4 of the TV show. Coincidence? Robert, awesome job on episode 4. Sina, I agree the show is great and the casting is spot on. I am hooked and was even able to get my wife interested. Glad to hear it is being received so well and even featured as best new show on the cover of EW.

Wasn't that neat? Few things in this world excite me, but to see our very own Andrew Lincoln and a bunch of walkers on the cover... well, I was plumb tickled!

The Entertainment Weekly cover was probably the only thing that could have capped off such an amazing year. I was shocked!

Sina, I hope you are right about the protective ability of beards. I'm sporting mine from no-shave November, and I too hope Rick's suddenly appears to save his ass from the impending mountain of undead. Hello to fellow local fan Kim in Portland (the dreamer). I too have had zombie infested dreams lately, sometimes navigating a foggy late afternoon suburbia crawling with roamers.

On to issue 80 and many more. You keep serving it up, and I'll keep devouring it. Happy Holidays!

Matt Blanchette
Scarborough, Maine

No-shave November? That's an idea.

I'm celebrating No-Shave Life... have been for years.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Sina,

A great issue. A faster read than usual but still worth the wait. I am super excited about the zombies becoming more of a threat in the issues to come. The television show has spoiled me in that department. It was nice to touch base with Morgan and Abe again. I hope both of them make it out of the impending invasion. Carl and Abe continue to be my favorites in the book and any scene focusing on them is a great scene in my opinion. I hope our characters get an opportunity to leave the community and head back out on the road. I still wouldn't mind seeing them head up to Canada and eventually heading even further into the unknown. They just "felt" too safe these past few issues but it was a great opportunity to add to the cast. Heath has grown on me and I feel that many of these characters still have life to them. I won't even begin to presume what will happen next as you always throw us for a curveball and I've learned not to trust the covers.

Now, onto something completely different...

The TV show which is making it worth my staying up on Sunday nights... what's up with October being the return of this awesome show? That's just too long. The casual viewer may not return after only six episodes and such a long break. Is there any chance amc will change its mind and order the second season to an earlier return date? If so, to whom do I write? We gotta ride the wave, my man. And that wave is riding high at the moment. Well, that is about all i have to say for this month. Other than to state that I hope Glenn makes it out as well. Love the guy. Keep up the spectacular work on the best comic currently being published. I can't wait for issue 100. Sincerely, matthew cashel

Matthew-

This next rant isn't geared towards you, but mainly to all fans: do you know hard it is to make a show?

Schedule-wise, Robert, Frank and company were all promoting the show when the second season got picked up. Then came the holidays. In order to produce a second season as fantastic as the first, the guys have to write it. At this point, everyone has heard the joke that it takes six hours to get a cup of coffee on set, so don't get me started on shooting itself... and then there's post production.

I wonder if this is how it is for True Blood fans, that they don't realize it takes exactly one year on the dot to bust out another season...

That being said: don't write anyone else letters but us. We adore them.

Also, don't most shows technically start the same time of year? Each season of Sons of Anarchy debuts in September. Mad Men usually debuts every July. We just had a shorter first season, so the wait is only longer than other shows by the time filled by addition episodes we didn't do.

Dear Robert,

Great issue, as always. It looks like the safe haven of the community will be abandoned which will put our characters on the move again. All I ask is they don't go to the CDC and find a scientist there to give them a scientific explanation for the zombies!

Har.

But seriously, I've been reading this comic for seven years and I think it-along with Invincible- are the best comics out there. They're the only comics that I HAVE TO READ the second they come out. When the TV show got announced I was so excited as I had been hoping to see a TV show of The Walking Dead forever. But I guess the comic is too radical for television. I'm thinking specifically of Carl's character and the things that he did from issue 6 on throughout the series. It's obvious to me that the TV show is shying away from that and is deviating too much from what makes the comic book so hard hitting and original.

I know you don't want to hear some fan go on and on about the TV show isn't good because it doesn't follow the comics page by page. I never wanted that myself, either. But taking away the whole Carl thing with Shane is like doing a TV show of Invincible without the big plot twist with Omni-Man. It's just not the same story or the same characters anymore, it's something different. Oh, well. Keep on keepin' on with the comics! And please don't ever make the characters go to the CDC to get a scientific lecture on what happens to the brain from the zombie plague.

Oy.

-Brooks Rogers

Brooks, I love you, I mean it, but you're a little wrong on the facts. Just because Carl hasn't killed Shane yet doesn't mean it can't happen. With TV, Robert and Frank have the luxury of not rushing through storylines in fear of cancellation (as is Robert's explanation for offing Shane so early).

That being said, Jon Bernthal's brought a ton of depth to Shane, and it would have been a waste of an awesome actor to kill him after six episodes.

Next.

Robert, Charlie and everyone else at TWD,

You are awesome. I'm sure this isn't news. TWD is without a doubt in my mind the best zombie comic/show to ever exist. I've been a huge fan of the series since 2006 and now the t.v. series has finally premiered! It's been everything I had hoped for with the exception that there are only 6 episodes in this season.

It's a relief to know you have been approved for a second season. Now that the flattery is out of the way I would like to discuss something that has been bothering me. You are clearly not a homophobe. You have included several gay characters in the series...but no lesbians? (The incident with Lori and Carol does not count.) I mean...what gives? As a lesbian myself, the only thing that could make this series any better would be a lesbian here or there. You're a guy, the majority of your fans are guys. I can't imagine that TWD would suffer from the introduction of a few sexy lesbians. Or maybe have a few old characters discover an amazing new world. (Andrea and Michonne... Cough...Cough.)

Zombies and lesbians. I don't think there is a better combination. That's always been my big beef with zombie films, shows and comics. So far Romero has been the only one to include a realistic lesbian in his Survival of the Dead. You would be my true hero if you would do this. Anyway, I hope that you will at least take this under consideration. Stay awesome.

Jenny

Well, Robert... if there was one criticism I hadn't made yet, it was for lesbians. Why haven't you made any lesbians yet?

There will eventually be lesbians. I promise. I think it would be a bad thing to have existing characters just suddenly realize they're lesbians though.

To Robert and the Gang

I wanted to write after reading issue 79 of The Walking Dead, When I first picked up the series it was back around issue 41, I immediately purchased all the back titles as quickly as I could get my hands on them and have been reading ever since. I want to say that reading about and seeing Aaron and Eric since the first time the primary survivors met them made me very happy. I had a feeling they were involved with each other and I am very glad to finally see them openly show intimacy and confirm my beliefs. I am openly gay as well and seeing a gay couple that isn't A. Stereotypically Feminine B. Hiding in the Closet is something I am very happy to see. Myself, I am neither A or B, I am just a regular person that just happens to prefer the same sex as opposed to the opposite sex and seeing these two survive and be featured in the comic, without making a big deal out of the whole event is wonderful.

I know I am rambling now, but I really want to thank you for not making this into an ordeal. (as I can see so -far-) My belief is that in order for people to truly accept diversity is to not make it a selling point, don't make it a plot point, in order to see something as ordinary it must be presented as ordinary and not a Beacon. But those are my thoughts.

Yeah, I was the one who asked Robert if he wanted to do some PR splash about it, but he hated that idea. Way to be down with the 'mos, Robert.

Hah! Yeah, I agree about the promotion thing being kind of questionable. I didn't write Aaron and Eric into the comic to sell more comics. They just happen to be gay dudes, no big deal.

Thank you for making this Comic, I've always been a fan of zombies, but when those movies ended, I would always want more. I'm so glad I can get my fix of the undead, even if I am terrified of them.

Kale Moshaaver

Thanks for the kind words, Kale. Just you wait, pretty soon we're going to have lesbian zombies!

Gotta jet for right now, we need to keep some space open for a little preview of Richard Starkings' Elephantmen! Neat stuff!

We'll be back in a month (or less?) to bring you another exciting chapter in No Way Out. Woo hoo.

Best of everything,

-Sina Grace

Rock over London, Rock on Chicago. Wheaties; the breakfast of champions!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

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C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 1870
RICHMOND, KY 40476

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

What a week! First, you fans get another issue of This Wonderful Delight, AND the first season of its AMC iteration is out on DVD/ Blu-Ray! Did you buy your copy yet?

We've got another emotional and exciting letter column for you this fine Wednesday. Once again, we're keeping it down to two pages so we can show off the AWESOME preview for Tomm Coker's new book at Image: Undying Love.

Let's see what you all thought of the first part of No Way Out!

Good evening Mr.Kirkman and Ms.Grace,

***Throws arms up in air* Excuse me, I've got some manhood I need to cut off.**

I have been reading Walking Dead since the get go and would like to congratulate you on your continued success. Getting the story in little pieces over the last few years has been tough, but with the less sporadic releases and fewer delays recently, it has been a pleasure to watch characters I care about in horrible situations.

Well, enough with the pleasantries I suppose. I'm mainly writing in because a project of mine is complete! (sort of) I have been working on a Walking Dead leg sleeve (tattoo for the normal folks!) for the past 2 years, and finally my calf and shin are done! So I figured I'd send in a few pictures of the work done by Xris at Imperial Tattoos in Toronto, Canada. So I hope you like the pictures, and I'll be sure to send in more pictures in a few years when the upper part of my leg is complete.

One quick question, I was just curious if we would ever see anymore of characters that have been killed off, like Dale. In a dream sequence or flash back or anything else. Thanks again!

Your permanently marked lifetime fan of your book,

Ryan Szoldatits

This is what it takes to get your letter printed nowadays: TATTS!

I'm going to show my hand here and say next issue I'm printing photos of a Walking Dead CAKE. A CAKE. It's no longer enough to just say you love us. Let's get some Basic Instinct fandom here, yeah?

Send your insane love letters to: sg@justkidding.info

Oh, and to answer your question: I can't predict what Robert will do next, but this isn't a Joss Whedon show: dead is dead.

Dear Robert,

Thumb's Up for some good old fashioned funk! Yeah...I said it.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

Just making sure we give Andrew J. Shaw the space he deserves. But Andrew, you've been too complimentary lately. What's going on? Where's the love/ hate inner-monologue we are used to?

Yeah, everything's been very brief and very positive. I must say I am EXTREMELY disappointed. (this is Robert in italics, but I don't even need to mention that anymore, do i?)

I just wrote this, and I wasn't sure where else to send it. I sort of feel like I should just send it in without comment, and let it speak for itself, awkward and lurching thing that it is.

Outside, Looking In

*Not hunger, quite; but want no feast can sate
We who are dead so yearn for what we've missed
To taste, to feel, to fill the hollowness with weight
We're pulled, and by your gravity we're kissed*

*I call it love, this ache to join your life
With us, diffusing warmth throughout our chill
We see your eyes, haunted by some grief
And only wish your heartache to be still*

*And though you shoot us down, yet still we come,
Again, again, we die and resurrect
But never do we sink so fully numb
To fail to feel the pain of your neglect*

*One day, I will break bread with you, my friend
We cannot lose, we cannot win, in the end*

Scott Nickell

When I was attending university, I remember some living poets coming in, talking about their chapbooks and how it was a big deal for small presses to publish their work. The print runs for those books are probably what- like two thousand copies? So, to get your poem published in the Walking Dead is kind of like hitting the major leagues.

Give us 10% of your book deal, kay?

Robert, I swear this is the last poem I publish. This lettercol is getting a little too soft, if you know what I mean.

I think I know what you mean #doesntknowwhathemeans Poems are awesome, though. Keep it up. I love them. Woo!

Hey, I just wanted to tell you how awesome your book and the series are! And just a quick question: any chance you can you give us a little character sum up pictorial like you did way back when? I'm a little embarrassed to say it, but I need a refresher for all these new faces.

Thanks!
Sarah

Sent from my iPod

I'm so glad you asked for this Sarah, because come April we will be releasing The Walking Dead: Survivor's Guide! It's a four-issue character bible about everyone living, dead, and somewhere in-between (which doesn't exist because we're not a Joss Whedon product).

What is your deal with Joss this letters column? Did I miss something?

Okay, enough joshing at Joss' behest. We were a little sore that he got Cobie Smulders for S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Maria Hill in the upcoming Avengers movie... Robert and Frank were really trying to lock her in to play Michonne!

Who?

I hope you all know I'm j/k right? That would be the worst casting move ever for one glaringly obvious reason: Cobie is Canadian.

You lost me...

Kirkman (may I call you that?),

Allowed.

In the on-going battle that is me attempting to get recognition from you, I have prepared some legitimate questions. I was reading the letter hacks and personally I think Daryl Dixon is one of THE best additions to TWD universe ever. I'm also really glad Shane is sticking around longer, I'd like to see where his character can go and I really appreciate that the series stays close enough that hardcore fans can relate but still be surprised. Anyways, I doubt it, but do you think a character spawned from the show will ever make it to the comics? *cough* Daryl *cough* Also, I want to see some Axel in the show!

Highly unlikely. We haz Axel and that should be bad-ass enough for you.

Leading further, I'll be surprised to see where the show goes, the governor would be insane, I almost don't think it can happen. Furthermore, I hear you guys fired a bunch of the writers for the show, is this true? What's happening next? (And where can I apply? ;)



As I write this, the writers room is being filled. You just missed the boat!

Let me just be clear... we can't help you get hired to work on the show in any capacity. Grip, gaffer, actor, director, caterer, whatever... can't do it, so please don't ask. Sorry, but I hope you understand.

I'll stop gushing about the AMC series for a minute and get to what's really important. Two predictions if you will. There was some promo once for TWD that said "No one is safe", I thought about it and it kinda gave me shivers. We all know Michonne is a total badass, but there was an issue (I'm not name dropping the exact number cause I'm not that cool) where Michonne decided to stick around with Rick (post-prison) in this I saw her inevitable fate, and when you take her it will be a grim day indeed. Also: Sophia and Carl better hook up or so help me. (p.s. I've totally been waiting for Rick to get some action, secretly was hoping it'd be Andrea)

You ruined the ending of this story arc. Robert finished reading the end of The Golden Compass books and got the idea to have some pre-pubes get it on.

Last: I wanna see Carl grow up to take over and Rick to get old, but I could read this comic for another 20 years and it'd only be about five for them... Any ideas for jumping far into the future? (Like you'd tell me)

You kind of answered your own question there, bub.

Also: You're killing me with these weekly re-prints... This is seriously the only comic I buy (other than the Amory Wars) and I totally want the issues (however I sold my TPBs to trade up for the hard covers.. Go me)

Go you indeed! Those hard covers look stellar on the book shelf!

p.s. whenever I play Red Dead Undead Redemption, I feel like I'm Rick Grimes.

Your Dude,

Robbie Puzzitiello

My dude,

Thanks for the fan mail. You always get recognized, you just don't always get printed! The same goes for all fan mail: we're reading them, we just don't always have the room to print! So first-time writers, please do not get discouraged if we don't get around to printing you!

YOUR dude,

Sina Grace

Hello!

Ok, first off, I admit I'm coming late to the world of Walking Dead...but you have me hooked. And, if I'm gonna be completely honest.. yes, it was the new AMC TV show that got me hooked. I've been a horror and comic fan my whole life, but zombies, in general, have never been my bag. Then I watched the premiere show on this past Halloween. Incredible episode, by the way. Anyway, I found myself drawn to AMC every Sunday night and ended up watching all 6 season one episodes. Being a comics fan I read Previews each month and knew from flipping through it that the Walking Dead comic series was already about 75 issues deep. Getting all those issues looked like a steep mountain to climb what with some of those prices for those early issues and all (yes, I know about the trades and hardcovers.. but, what can I say, I'm an old school comic fan...only actual comic books will do!). Then one day I open my latest previews and what do I see? The Walking Dead Weekly reprints! YES, thank you! I already have the first 13 weekly reprints on order with my online comic shop. Which leads me to my question...are you planning on reprinting the entire series run or only the amount of issues that you can reprint in 2011? In all the ads I've seen it just says throughout 2011, but that would only allow for the reprints to reach issue #50...give or take an issue or so. I cast my vote now to continue reprinting the series into 2012 until it catches up to at least issue #80 (which is the first original issue I ordered.. lol). Sorry, I'm greedy like that and would like to have the entire run reprinted. And it's kinda your fault anyway for making such an awesome comic! Anyway, thanks for the reprint series and I look forward to reading all those past storylines as well as getting into the current ones as well. Great job to all involved...you've got a new fan that will be with you until the end.

Yours,
Jeffrey Pipes
Citrus Heights, California

Thanks for picking up the Weekly books! We have all had a blast looking at the old letters columns, and looking at the older covers, too!

I have no clue how long we're running the Weekly series. Survey says until sales decline ;)

Ok, great T.V. show! Issue #80 was a great prelude to what we all love about this series. The tragedy and triumph of people. I know your going to do what your going to do, but.....please let Rick get together with Jesse! I lost my wife years ago (to divorce) And I often think about it would be once to have someone to be cool with. I think it would open up a lot of venues for many of these characters. Also, I just retired from the army after 22 years. What's the chance of having after minor character with the same name as me? He could be a one panel "Joe" who gets jacked, I would be very happy if there was a character with my name. First, last or both. (Last name???)

Buddy, you've officially entered Robert's subconscious. For legal reasons we'll say it was all accidental... kind of like when my dad named his dog Nugby, so when he wrote the song "Nugby is a Bitch," his ex-girlfriend (of the same name) could not press charges for defamation of character.

The real punch line of that story is that someone named their daughter Nugby.

Take care, you people produce a top of the line book. What are the chances of a spin off? TWD west coast? Sounds catchy.

-SFC Rafael Martinez

More like Walking Dead BEST COAST. #musicreference

Hey Robert,

I'm gonna keep this as short as possible so as not to take away from your precious (and mutually beneficial) comic writing time. This is my first time ever writing in to a comic. Walking Dead is the first comic I ever bought. I read #1-79 in a week and a half digitally (and illegally) and if I hadn't I still would not be into comics. I then went and bought as many Walking Dead comics as I could (I'm only missing about 15 total but the Weeklys are making up for that). You're a brilliant writer and Tony Moore's art / covers show he excels at and enjoys his craft. Consequentially, I'm now reading Brit, Invincible, The Exterminators, and now own every Fear Agent issue. This has all happened in about 2-3 weeks time. I happen to know for a fact that Walking Dead has done this for many more people than just myself (that is, stealing their heart and turning them into a comic fiend). Thank you for the time you took to arrange and write this and for the persistence it takes to keep this great story great every month. I can't wait for issue #81! Seems like the start of another great story arc. Writing is an art and you are a great artist. Most praise that I would give you has been given to you many times over. On to something else I've been itchin' to say.

Did you make sure to reserve a copy of SUPER DINOSAUR? I hear that's good, too...

It's not good, Sina, it's GREAT! So great you won't believe it! BUY! BUY! BUY!

About the critics, advise-givers, and complainers, who are all haters in my book; I've stopped reading the Letter Hacks besides your replies because so many fans are self-proclaimed knowledgeable critics. After reading most the complaints against you I feel as if I'm a little dumber. I mean, seriously, what a waste of their time and yours. But unless this gets published I guess I'm preaching to the choir. Then again, it is nice to read your back-handed retorts. Keep on doing what you've been doing from the very start of this project. It doesn't just work, it busts ass. I rest assured that you already know that.

-Andrew
Sacramento, CA

So, printing your letter is like getting bitten by a fanboy, and now you are one of the countless hordes of Walking Dead fans? YOU GOT BIT!

F'r real: no need to put down people with criticism and what-not. Would you be happy to read four pages of people saying how much they like the book? And more to the point: would I like finding new ways to make four pages of praise hilarious?

No. I wouldn't...

Hello, Since the AMC show has been on, I've started getting into your graphic novels, which is what I call them. Some call them comics, I guess.

Some call them funny books, if you need all the proper slang.

Anyway, it's an excellent story, and great writing for the most part.

I did want to point out that, as is often the case, the discussion between the preacher and the scientist in issue #63, about how to get to Heaven, is wrong. I'm not out to offend, but it is more often than not where a simple reading of Biblical text would go a long way to overcoming the ignorance so many people seem to have in (basically) who God is, how He says we can spend eternity with Him, and what He wants us to do, etc. The Bible in no way says that it's BOTH.

Doing good works and accepting Christ as savior. That is completely wrong. The book of Romans (3-4) and Ephesians (2:5-10) is crystal clear about that, as was Jesus (John 3:16-17 for example), and the book of James goes further to include works as an evidence of knowing and following God. I just wanted to point this out. I see it a lot in film and writings out there. It leads to major misinterpretation of the Bible, and of Christianity. I'm not hypocritically judging, but do want people to stick to getting things right. I also think your entire story line raises interesting questions, and points out some real truths about human nature in good times, and especially in crisis. I wonder how I'd react, even as a Christian, in that situation.

I'm not throwing any witty retort towards conversations about Him, so Robert, if you want to add anything, go for it.

Eh...

Would I end up like Rick? Perhaps. That's the character I identify with the most, and with a mid-life career change toward law enforcement, I'm particularly interested in his character.

Keep up the good work with this storyline, and I hope the AMC series continues. Looking forward to more. Troy W. Jasper, GA

AMC will continue! Cross your eyes, nose, and toes that they continue for like ten season!

And, I would probably end up like Shane: shot in the neck by a CHILD. WHAT?

I said it earlier, but read on for a preview of Tomm Coker and Daniel Freedman's Undying Love! Make sure you asked your retailer to set aside a copy! It's suh-weet!

And: if you're looking to buy more Kirk-merch, look no further than the Skybound SHOP! We have a lot of goodies from the cons, and some new exclusive items to boot.

www.skyboundent.com/shop

Moan,

-Sina Grace

Groan,

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Well, that's one way to end an issue.

Hi folks, I hope you're enjoying that fact that we got this issue out so soon after issue 82 (this is editor Sina Grace, writer Robert Kirkman will be in italics).

Like this. Awesome, huh?

If you've caught any of the interviews and press lately, you'll know that Robert and Frank have great plans for season 2, and that no one will be disappointed.

But really, who CARES about that stupid TV show?! Did you read this issue? Wow... how are we going to follow that up, right?

Thoughts on No Way Out part two: Zombie Boogaloo!

Kirkman & Crew,

Yeah, guys, No Way Out is Far Out!

Loved the scene with Michonne. Um, Glenn brings up a really great point: Rick leaving Carl with Jessie; they don't even know Jessie. She could be batshit crazy. See, that's what happens when a man gets laid. We lose all sense of logic.

So much happened in this issue, it felt packed full. Forgot his name, but the guy that got eaten at the wall: sucks to be him. Now, Morgan I have no qualms about. I was happy to see him get bitten. He's the preacher, right? He tried to throw Rick and Crew under the bus many months ago. Take that, bitch!

Man, way to be racist. Get your characters straight. That's Gabriel you're talking about.

Now, onto other serious issues. A friend would like to get a zombie tattoo. I suggested getting a zombie tattoo of Adlard's art since she's a huge Walking Dead fan. So, she's asking Charlie for permission to have his art tattooed on her body. Is it cool, Charlie?

Sophea Uk
Salem, OR

Uhmm, Charlie won't mind. I'm speaking entirely on his behalf, but he's never expressed a problem with fan art before.

I am whole-heartedly against it on the other hand... but I must admit, I kind of hate tattoos, just like I hate cars that are covered in stickers... it's like the same thing right? Can I admit that? I mean, it's flattering when you guys show us all these tattoos you're getting, I think it's great and all... but really, what if this book starts to suck. What if you really like something like say, tattoos and I come out and admit that I DON'T like them and then you start hating the book because of it... but then, you're STUCK with this tattoo of the book? I mean... these are the things that keep me up at night.

Dear TWD Crew, I thought I was clean, I HATE YOU KIRKMAN!!

This is my 2nd mail to a comic ever in 15 years, my first one actually got published in X Factor 117, they spelled my last name wrong though the b*st*rds.

You don't have to edit bastards, or really any fucking language in this letters column, god damn it.

I have only myself to blame, it was snail mail back then and my handwriting was crap.

I was around 12 when I started collecting comics, first translated into Dutch, later on when I got older I bought the original US versions. Over time my hobby turned into an addiction, I bought everything that had people in it that spoke in text balloons.

So I decided a couple of years ago to quit cold turkey. I think I broke his heart that day when I told the owner of my comic shop that I wanted to cancel all my subscriptions, I think he even cried.

Later on when my wife saw my collection for the first time she said something like: "HELL NO, I will not have this in my house!!" So I sold everything except that X-Factor 117 and some other comics I truly wanted to keep.

Then I saw TWD on tv. Yes I downloaded it from the internet. Let me explain, here in Holland we get America's next top model, Holland's next top model, The Bachelor, Holland's Bachelor, Idols and Dutch Idols etc. etc.

Holland's Bachelor must be a dreamboat.

That's right we get the all that sh*t twice, but do we get TWD? Nooooo! So that's why I downloaded it and I loved it. So I went online, big mistake. I found out it was based on a comic and then something stirred in me, i just had to have it. That owner of the comic shop almost fell of his chair when he saw me walk in. I think I saw euro signs in his eyes. I bought every trade and issue of TWD and I couldn't put them back down. I hungered for more.

Pause: I want to point out that Arnoud totally bleeped his own cuss words. Have you not read this book? We do nip slips, eye gouges, gay kisses and all sorts of things that are typically deemed uncouth... yet this fan still wants to give us a clean letter.

Christ, isn't it embarrassing to admit that gay kisses are considered edgy? You know what's hard to look at? Eye gouges and gay kisses--yeah, those things are equal, thanks society.

Okay... back to trying to be neutral... not that I particularly like to watch anyone kiss...

I'm sure my wife suspects something and soon I will have to face her and it's all your fault!

Damn Kirkman, I thought I was clean.

Arnoud Hartlief (thats with a H marvel!)

So, does censoring your naughty words help you feel clean? Thanks for writing us a pretty amazing story. We're glad to be your FIRST printed letter in the 2000s.

okay to print
(Do we have to say this with you guys?)

(Nah)

The Walking Dead show isn't in Holland? That seems weird. I'll have to look into that.

Two words for you:

Kill - dozer.

Shouldn't be that TOO outlandish don't you think? There IS a construction site nearby that has to have some extra equipment lyin' around. And hey if Marvin Heemeyer could do it - so can the Walking Dead peeps.

That's honestly one of the first things I thought of when they reached the DC area. And YES, Dead Reckoning did also come to mind. I leave it to the creative genius of Robert Kirkman how to squeeze that into the series if he decides to go that route.

Awesome series by the way.

- Marlon

Okay, if Tim Daniel can make a Walking Dead Survivor's Guide (out next month, kids), I want to make a Walking

Dead: Ideas We’ll Never Use Guide. Pretty please?

It would be pretty funny. And awesome. I’d read it.

Dear Kirkman n Grace,

Thumbs Up!!

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

That’s it, Andrew... if you send one more positive and upbeat letter to us again, we’re not publishing you anymore. I’ve had it.

This is just LAZY. WTF, Andrew?!

Dear Robert and Sina,

I just finished reading Issue #81 and am left with the same sinking feeling I had when Dale was bitten (should this letter be printed, we may know Morgan’s fate by the time it is). However, Robert’s quote at the end of “Letter Hacks” lifted my spirits and I need to ask: was that a quote from Wesley Willis?

Aren’t they all?

And what if it IS?! What of it?

Which led me to think: I’m surprised I haven’t seen/read any of the characters missing something as simple as listening to (or even playing) music. I remember some time ago the promoting slogan when WD first came out (i.e. “when there’s no television...”), but with the communal surroundings Rick and the crew came upon, there didn’t seem to be any mention of entertainment (particularly music—I can see Michonne suddenly matching her fencing skills with playing a mean acoustic guitar... or maybe not). Of course, keeping the noise level down to avoid attracting zombies would probably make sense, but it just seems like the growing community would have eventually devised some means of entertainment created or performed by its inhabitants as a means of further bringing them together (and I’m not thinking the Coliseum-like games provided by the Governor).

Charlie- brilliant drummer that he is- hates drawing instruments. There’s the truth.

I may be musing on all of this because each story arc almost cries to have musical accompaniment which, although impossible in the comic medium, speaks volumes of how your stories draw in the reader...

Or it’s the Wesley Willis quote.

Keep up the great work!

Best,

Keith Emerson
“Porn Star Zombies” writer/director

Wait, there’s a movie called Porn Star Zombies? Robert, why didn’t you tell me?

I was keeping it all to myself, of course.

Hi Robert (or Sina),

Quick question, and sorry if this was already answered in a previous letters column that I missed:

I fucking love TWD. Not a comics fan as an adult, though I loved them as a kid. The typical superhero story lines just don’t interest me. But your use of the zombie apocalypse to create these brilliant character studies has kept me captivated from issue 1 to 76 (devoured the first 70 in about a week but trying to make these last few issues last). Rick Grimes is definitely my favorite character. You’ve done an amazing job of writing him.

My question - like I said, typical comic stories come off cheesy and don’t interest me. When I finally get caught up on TWD, I will be sad. What are some books (comic or text) that influenced your style of writing TWD, maybe that contain compelling character studies like that of Rick? Any standout favorites you could recommend?

Benjamin Casey

I’d imagine at this point we have some new readers, and Robert’s read a few more books, so it’s not as though the answer will always be the same.

What say ye, Kirkman?

What inspired me? That’s always going to remain the same, Savage Dragon, Minimum Wage, I am Legend, Point Break (the movie) (not really). Good books I’ve read recently. Bob (Minimum Wage) Fingerman’s PARIAH is great, there was an ad on our back cover that featured a completely

sincere quote from me. And I think Morning Glories is a good book by Image... if you like comics... like I do. Oh, and Savage Dragon either recently got GREAT again or I just suddenly started enjoying it more. I love that book almost more than I EVER have right now.

Kirkman and Co.,

I knew it was only a matter of time before the defenses failed for the Community (the arc is called No Way Out, of course), but as much as I loved to see some zombie action and pwnag3 here (poor Tobin), my favorite moments of this month were definitely at the beginning of the issue, BEFORE the walls were breached. No Way Out is definitely building to a crazy rampage (my gut tells me so) but the brief interludes shown beforehand are what really sing for me.

Your gut was right. Did you notice pages 18 and 19?

I didn’t expect Rick to just roll with Jessie’s advances the way that he did, but I can’t really blame the guy. I can’t say that Ron will feel the same if and when he finds out, but I guess that remains to be seen. And what will Carl think? The following segue into the intimate moments of some of the OTHER characters was very well done I thought, yet another testament as to how this book really is about the SURVIVORS, not the literal Walking Dead themselves. From Glenn’s insomnia to Michonne’s verbal lashing of Morgan, it is interesting to me to see the complex, long term psychological effects of everything on these characters. Now the Dead are closing in, and you know what? The survivors are STILL more dangerous I think, I can’t wait to see if I’m right...

Yeah, I don’t think Carl will care at this point. He’d probably be confused as to why his pop had his EYE on her to begin with... nyuck nyuck.

Good stuff, keep it coming...

I’ll keep crummy eye puns coming, just make sure you’ve got your eyes peeled for `em.

By the way, I picked up the first 4 issues of Walking Dead Weekly basically for the opportunity to read the original letters columns. I’m loving it! I am picking up on some things I missed before, too. I never noticed the Science Dog symbol on Carl’s shirt before, for instance (I didn’t notice it in the TV show either), so even though I have read the story before, it all seems fresh to me. Thanks for that, I’ll be getting everyone I know check these out so they know where all the AMC awesomeness all started.

Yeah! How about them 6-7 page letter columns? Yikes! Could you imagine having to answer that many letters? Good work, Robert.

I was so young back then... I remember staying up until four am answering letters... it was such a... horrible time in my life--but I LOVED it!

March 8th is the day the DVD drops, eh? NICE... That is my sister’s birthday, and I was just asking her TODAY what it was that she wanted... Well, thanks for making that easy for me! Barbie and I enjoy this book each and every month (we even had a little party for the premiere on Halloween!!!) and I’m sure this will earn me some big time Brownie Points. I got her a SWEET Walking Dead T-shirt for Christmas, so the DVD is a definitely worthy follow up. I can’t wait to marathon that season over and over again until next Halloween.

Until next time!

Cam Stylez

We are gift that keeps on giving. Speaking of which: buy all your gifts at the Skybound e-store! skyboundent.com/shop

A few years back, I was an avid reader of comic books. I started my journey with Mark Millar and Brain Michael Bendis when they re-did the Marvel Universe under the Ultimate line. I gradually picked up and dropped (and picked up again and dropped again) many Marvel titles, but after a while I got discouraged. No one seemed to be doing anything different. No matter who was writing a book, it all seemed like it was the same. I quit. I stopped reading.

I did pick up a story arc here or there. Millar’s Kick-Ass series, I went back to Ultimate X-Men for a bit (your arcs if I remember... Longshot, Gambit... still felt like “here we go again” but it was nostalgic for me. I was raised on the 90’s Marvel cartoons) but nothing really stuck. Most recently I tried to get back in with a Spidey arc. It was good. But it wasn’t enough to make me stick around.

Wow, you really wanna start this, on Robert’s turf?

A friend recommended I try reading something that had nothing to do with super heroes. Their top pick was The Walking Dead. I’d heard of the book, but I never thought much of it. I mean, it’s just zombies right? I’ve seen zombie movies. I routinely dream about zombies (I don’t always make it through those) but a comic about them? My buddy lent me a stack of issues. A large stack of issues. I haven’t made it all the way through (I’m at #51 now).

Hurry up, slow poke!

You hooked me. You hooked me you wonderful, wonderful man and I’ve rediscovered the joys of comic books! It’s not just zombies. It’s people. People who I can see as being real. People I care about, and who I miss when they’re gone. It’s moments like Carl telling his sick father that he can take care of himself and everyone dies and it’s okay, and then crying and telling his father he’s scared. It’s the emotional impact it has on me as I read it. It’s the fact that the characters evolve and grow over time, something that doesn’t seem to happen in the more colorful realm of super hero books. It’s how seeing how far humanity can fall, and yet also seeing how we can rise to the occasion.

That humanity will bleed into the video game iteration of the comic, too! Courtesy of Telltale Games! Deets soon.

How much product placement can I incorporate into one letters column? I guess you have to ask: how much product is there to place?

TOO MUCH!

I’m going to be spending a lot at the ol’ comic shop to get this collection in its entirety (since I doubt my friend will let me keep his issues indefinitely) but it’s worth it. This isn’t just a comic, it’s one of the best things (comic or otherwise) I’ve ever read.

Thank you, sir! And keep up the great work!

-Ben

Hey Ben, thanks for writing. Wait `til you read this storyline, and see your letter printed. What kind of compliments will you have for Robert the “wonderful, wonderful man” Kirkman?

Hey, thanks for the letter, Ben. There’s a whole world of comics out there for you to discover I’m glad you found your way to this book and are enjoying it (hurry up and catch up). Try more creator-owned... I’m sure you’ll find more comics to love.

Hi All (Robert, Sina, Chuck, Cliff, Russ),

OOohh, I don’t know about calling Charlie “Chuck.” He hates that show.

Kidding!

I wanted to comment on a few things (reader submitted letters & the comic). My wife and I have been reading your wonderful series since a co-worker turned us (back) on to comics at the end of 2009. This is the ONLY comic I read every single month and I like it that way. Regarding a letter from the current issue - I am glad you are not diluting the series with spin-offs or prequels or parallel storylines. Keep all that shit for the fan-made crap-heap. I appreciate your integrity, Mr. Kirkman. You could have ruined this great piece of art by going the route of UBER-CAPITALISM. Again, thank you.

Did I mention Walking Dead Bobble Heads? Kidding!

One question, and I’m sure you have been asked this before (Unfortunately I haven’t had the pleasure of reading EVERY SINGLE LETTER HACK since issue #1), what kind of research do you do? In the issue I just read 15 minutes ago (#81), the guys are talking about the surrounding wall, and it really sounds like you have a firm grasp on the subtleties of fence/exterior wall construction. I am no blue-collar construction worker, but it sounded convincing. Do you have a resource (besides the internet) that you go to for detailed information about many of your plot devices (psychology, warfare tactics, construction, survivalism etc...)?

Ok, I’ll let you get to more important things.

Love,
Mike & DanaMarie

Don’t let Mike and DanaMarie down, Robert, give them a good answer!

I have put fences up myself... so I kind of know how to do that... so for that it was mostly memory. I’ve done a lot of blue-collar stuff with my dad growing up, he was pretty handy and I watched/helped him do a lot of stuff. So that helps.

For the rest, I really just read stuff on the internet. I always use multiple sources so I know it’s not junk... when it’s something that really matters.

Sometimes, and really, only sometimes, I just fake it... because it’s more fun that way. And you guys never seem to notice!

I just finished reading issue 81 and it was awesome! I’ve really come to love the comic and the tv show. I had never heard of TWD until the show came out. After I watched the first episode, I had to read the books and I wasn’t disappointed in the least. I was

reading the letters in #81 and saw where “Jenny” asked for lesbian characters. You commented that “it would be a bad thing to have characters suddenly realize they’re lesbians.” Now, I’m not begging for lesbians or anything, just commenting on that one particular idea. I think that if two people, men or women, did hook up, it would just show how much people have changed as a result of everything that has happened. Completely straight men and women have fallen for other people of the same sex many times when put in severely stressful situations. Like prisons. They just make due with what’s available. It’s part of the human need for companionship. Anyway, I just wanted to comment on that one particular issue. I have no complaints or criticism about the book or show itself. You’re doing an AMAZING job! Keep up the good work!

“Like prisons,” gotta love it. That was like of addressed in the “like prisons” storyline. Also: Aaron could have been completely heterosexual, but after his girlfriend of seven years got brutally eaten, and when he was saved by Eric on horseback, he sought the comfort of a brave, rugged survivor, and turned his back on the only love he had, for she was a zombie.

I’m guessing this is one of those “Ideas that we’ll never use” moments...

Think so...

Your newest fan,

Menace2Sobriety

P.S. How many episodes will Season 2 be? How long will it run? Will Michonne make it into the cast?

M2S- Season 2 will be 13 episodes. Frank has been very public about wanting Michonne in season 2, so I guess you’ll have to wait and find out!

Michonne? What?

What’s with all the brothers dying man? You’ve introduced like 5 or 6 black men over the series span and all are now infected or perma-dead. Just kidding but I’ve noticed there is no black male that has survived more than 3 major attacks (human or otherwise).

Jio Freed

We killed a white woman this issue. That has to count for something. Furthermore: Robert spent pages on Michonne mourning over Morgan and his death, and killed off Jessie faster than you can say “I’m just not that into you.”

There’s an unnamed black kid from issue 72 who is still alive. I will make sure Robert keeps him alive forever.

Okay, that’s WRONG. Because Morgan, who died this issue, was introduced in issue 1. He survived until issue 83... which means he was the only character who’d been in this book as long as RICK, who is still alive. So aside from Rick, it was a black male who lasted the longest in this series. Beat that!

And we kill white dudes ALL. THE. TIME. I hate white people, clearly.

Have you considered auctioning off a part as a zombie on the show by accepting the highest donation to a specified charity as the winner? If not, you should.

That is all.

-Nikko

Sent from my iPhone

There are contests, and bribes for that.

-Sina

Sent from my cumbersomeLaptop

That’s all the letters we can answer this month. Check back with us next time as Robert & co. wrap up No Way Out. Woo hoo!

Gruhh,

-Sina Grace

Okay, that’s a wrap!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello readers!

I cannot wait to do next month's letters column, because we received quite literally over a hundred e-mails in response to the Carl moment. Robert and I will stay up all night answering as many of those letters as possible.

Wait what?! (I'm in italics, as always--Robert)

For those of you who caught us at WonderCon: thanks! It was such a fun convention, and San Francisco is a great city to do fun things like, I don't know, a bar crawl that includes pulling swords out of girls' mouths, stapling money to people's faces, and similar mirth.

Your jokes are starting to make less and less sense--I simply DON'T know what you're talking about... but it does sound like fun.

A'ight, now time for thoughts on No Way Out part three: You, me and zombie.

Hi Robert,

Others have probably beaten me to this, but in #79 you asked about adult-sized footy pajamas...

www.pajamacity.com sells them in both fleece and flannel, some with a "drop seat" (or "hiney-flap")! Fun and funny patterns too -- I like the Old School Tattoo Design...

--dexter midnight

Robert, I know what I'm getting you for your birthday. #inappropriate

I hope I look HALF as creepy as the people on that website!

Hey Guys,

Nice Job on the current "No Way Out" storyline, really enjoying the buildup and suspense. While Rick sure has been on an emotional roller coaster or two, I'm intrigued now that some of his recent behavior is very erratic, and perhaps mildly delusional. I don't think I've ever read a series where the main protagonist has been through such a deep character change, in which he may end up being a lesser person in the end. I mean seriously, the guy is getting real unpredictable and contradictory in his behavior. The whole "they're not our children" speech to Jessie at the end of #82 was a real worry.

What happens if the main character becomes an unlikable asshole? Now that is something you almost never see in any storytelling medium, but it would probably work in this story. Rick could do the whole "fall from grace/ dethroned leader" thing, and then maybe a redemption story from there.

Well, there have been plenty of successful works of fiction where the main character is an unlikable asshole, I think that's half of the original programming on Fox, right?

This issue may have answered your question. Rick's speech at the end could prove that this character has a long way to go before he becomes a lesser person.

Speaking of Rick, now that he has finally removed the bandages from his wrist stump, is he ever going to find a prosthetic device to attach to it? Surely amongst the thousands of undead, there must be one or two out there with a prosthetic arm or a hook or something he could use. He could rig something up, kind of like Dale's leg, but more badass.

Maybe an Evil Dead style chainsaw hand? No?

Cheers,
Dave Ellison
NSW, Australia

Am I the only one who is so over Rick putting anything on that stump besides lotion?

Truly, guys, if you start writing letters about different things Carl can put in his eye socket (IF HE LIVES), I will quit this job. Brian Bockrath at AMC will NOT be pleased if I quit (there, Brian, I mentioned you in the lettercol-- tactlessly, at that).

You mentioned Brian Bockrath? I totally love Brian Bockrath! I didn't see a mention of Brian Bockrath. Where did you mention Brian Bockrath?

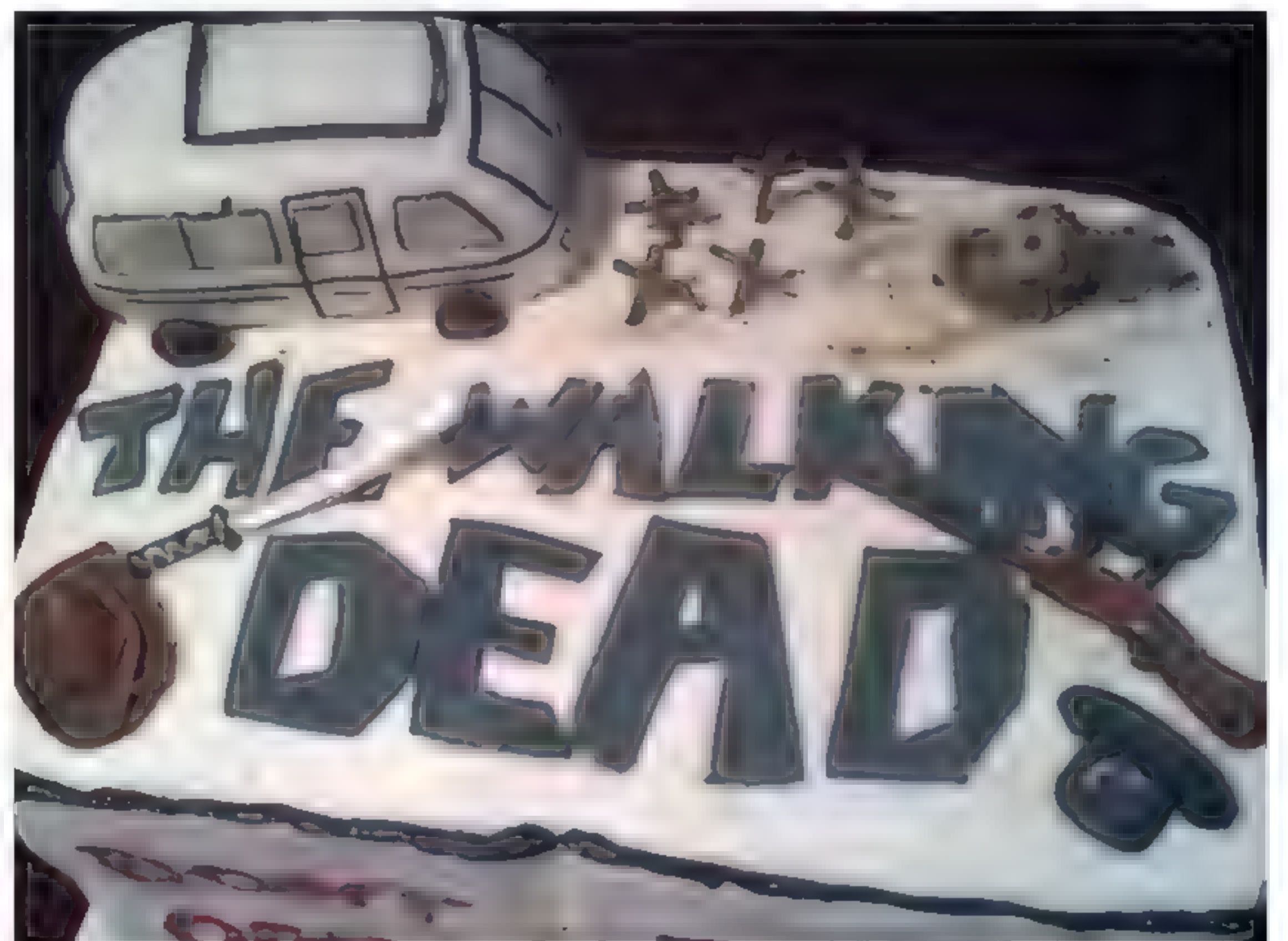
Oh.

That was pretty cool how you mentioned Brian Bockrath in this letters column, Sina.

Hey!

I am a huge fan of the Walking Dead books and I just thought you might like to see this cool Walking Dead cake I made for my cousins 18th birthday/ New years party. It's a 5 layer cake and everything on it is edible. Hope you like it, thanks for looking!

-Michelle



WIN. WIN WIN WIN WIN. WINNING.

That won't be dated at all by the time this ships, Sina. Good work.

Dear Kirksina, (I've made your guy's name a power couple name. Like Brangelina or one of those other power couples that I can't think of at the moment. Cool, huh?)

Robert's wife calls us Beavis and Butthead. Does that count?

Really? Ouch, c'mon Sina... you're so much better than these jokes.

Couple of questions. (I only expect an answer to the first one, but feel free to answer the others)

Is issue 82 the first time the Z word was used? (Andrea page 6 panel 1) Just wondering.

Grah...

Huh... that's funny, I'm looking at the TPB and it says "roamers" (got that, Sina?).

Abraham continues to impress me as a killing machine. The guy has become my favorite male character. You're going to kill him in this story line, aren't you?

Nah. I want an action figure of him, so I keep begging Robert not to off him 'til that happens!

Michonne has been my favorite female character pretty much from the first time she showed up. You're going to kill her in this story line, aren't you?

Thanks for such a great book.

Rob Shelor
Roanoke VA

Michonne isn't dead in the medical sense, but I think she may truly be dead inside after having to take care of Morgan.

You're so deep...

Hello, oh great and powerful Kirkman *bows*

Never written fan mail before, but I just wanted to say; Walking Dead just keeps getting better and better. It's my favorite comic (Astounding Wolf-Man is my second and Invincible's third). I'll be honest, when the group first came across the Alexandria Safe-Zone I thought to myself "Oh no, he's gonna ruin the comic.

Things can't be this safe" and I was expecting a lot of "Just another day in a safe, quite town" issues. But then Rick pulls a gun and Derek's crew turn up shortly followed by their little oasis falling to pieces... Love it.

I just hate waiting for each issue.

Speaking of waiting: When does Season 2 of the series start in GB?

Shrug, when does Season 2 start for any of us? No, seriously, there will be news about the second season once we get closer to its fall premiere.

The Walking Dead TV Show is great! When I heard the show was coming I couldn't wait to see it! I heard there were going to be changes to it to keep it fresh for all the comic fans and that just made me more excited. I actually invited a load of mates over to my place to see each episode. I gotta say though, I never expected so many new characters and such drastically different storylines. In fact, it seemed more like a REALLY good piece of Walking Dead fan fiction, which makes it even better 'cause I don't spend the whole time watching it looking for little differences and mistakes. An actual word-for-word, action-for-action TV remake of the comics could NEVER live up to the comics. Also, do we ever meet Jeff Grimes? He was mentioned by Lori aaaages ago unless I'm mistaken and it would be interesting to see what he's like. I don't see how any relative of Rick's could have died already. I mean, if Rick can sleep through the start of the apocalypse in a hospital bed, find his family and continue to lead the group without his dominant hand surely his brother is still about somewhere?

Hmm, Robert?

Well, Jeff's story will not be touched on in this series. How unrealistic would it be for Rick to go from Kentucky to Georgia to Virginia and then run into his brother after the fall of civilization? (The answer is not very.)

And... Didn't you say a while back in Letter Hacks that Rick'll probably be dead by 100? We're on 82 now, man.... Please tell me there's not only 14 issues of Rick left... I don't want him to go.

He's got an action figure coming out in the Fall, I'm done with him.

Now, THAT'S funny...

Oh -odd question here- have you thought of any more potential forms of travel characters could be using yet? Like, anyone got a train running or cycling around? I'd love to see a gang of skaters. Thanks for taking the time to read my letter.

-Josh Kybett

It'd be really neat if everyone rolled around the rural, wooded areas, on those stupid Segways... man, that would be an all-time low for this book. It's an all-time low for this letters column, if I do say so myself.

Guh-ROAN.

Guys-

Another great issue. But, I have to tell you that I got Robert's long term plans figured out. Sorry to spill the beans. That panel when Carl tells Sophia not to be scared, that everything will be fine? That was Carl's first step towards taking over the book when Rick dies, a la recent events in the Savage Dragon with Malcolm Dragon taking the reigns from dear old dad Kurr. C'mon man we know you love Larsen. Maybe I'm wrong. But does that mean you'll kill Carl? If so, your sick, killing kids is wrong man. Even Deadpool don't kill kids (you are reading Remender's run on X-Force, right?). I thought you were sick when you "killed" Oliver over in Invincible. Course, you didn't really kill him....

Hehehehehehehehehehehe.

I'm clearly in a rut.

Anywho...really just wanted to say I've been reading comics for about 25 of my 32 years and this is the first time I'm writing a fan letter. TWD and Invincible are my favorite comics on a pretty long pull list. Also, thank you for publishing the weekly reprints. I jumped on board at 67 and even tho I read the trades I prefer getting the singles with the covers, and letters pages and what not. I hope sales on it stay strong. At least for the first 66 weeks. #CuzAfterThatI'mSoJumpingOff. I do plan on keeping with the regular series for as long as it stays around.

Keep Up The Good Work!

Pete Maranzano
Old Bridge, NJ

Peter, you didn't do the hash tag right, but I give you points for trying! So don't jump off that Old Bridge. Oh man, newer low for this letters column...

Had to keep it short this issue, we needed the extra space to showcase some amazing pages from our first Skybound Original: Witch Doctor. Robert has been working with creators Brandon Seifert and Lukas Ketner, helping them produce the best miniseries this side of town!

We're all incredibly proud of this project, and we cannot wait for you to read!

And I PROMISE, loads of letters next issue.

Best,

Sina

Yeah, and guys and gals, give WITCH DOCTOR a shot. The book is totally awesome. I think you'll come out of this preview loving it--so make sure you ask your retailer to order it and by all means--pre-order the thing!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hey Folks!

We have very little space to cover a TON of fan mail AND show off the amazing Witch Doctor # 0!!! So I'll shut up, and present a multitude of raging letters about Carl.

Robert will reply in italics.

IT wasn't ALL rage!

Congrats,

You've just finished me as a fan/reader. Too much, too far.

Peter Leiser

Doubtful. Next.

Oh, we open with this one? Come on, Sina!

Hey Sina (BTW, I was also picturing a svelte Scandinavian woman for some odd reason :) and Robert:

Long time reader, first time writer... but I feel as if we've been speaking ever since I got hooked to WD a year and some months ago. Yours are the only letters I habitually read. WD got me back on comics, after an all-too-long hiatus, coming shortly after Preacher closed its pages and left me sobbing for more.... So not only am I grateful for 83 badass issues, but I appreciate the reintroduction to all that comicdom currently has to offer (just Kirkman's getting entirely too much of my time every month between WD and Invincible and catching up on all his back issues...).

But WD.... it's the story I've been wanting since I first read The Stand as a pre-teen. All I need is some token stability and a slowly forming civil structure of sorts to jealously protect against all predators dead and not... perhaps only Garth Ennis's original run on Crossed can come close to considering the morals of survival and the limits of humanity amidst a devastated global backdrop.

Also, I'm a huge fan of killing loved characters. I think it makes any tale of survival or dystopia so much more believable and stressfully suspenseful when anyone could go at any moment. I mean I am still shocked by Lori..... (shakes head)

But CARL?!?!?! Anyone but Carl, man. Seriously. Not only do I love that kid but if you kill him I'll never get my wife to read WD (which is possibly my only window to comics generally for her). I know that Robert recently said something in Invincible's letter pages that he would not seemingly kill someone only to have them actually be fine, but surely that doesn't apply here?!

So, Mr. Kirkman, I leave you with the words of a loving (and desperate) father: "Please. Save his Life!"

Hugs and Kisses,
Brent

All the hugs and kisses in the world cannot sway Robert's ultimate designs for Carl.

All I can say is, he's not dead... yet.

YOU FAT FUCK!!!

CARL WAS THE BEST CHARACTER EVER.

IT WAS OK TO CHOP RICK'S HAND OFF, KILL TYRESE AND LORI AND THE BABY.

BUT CARL?

SO WHY THE HELL YOU WROTE THAT FUCKING SCENE WITH MORGAN AND CARL?

YOU COULD KILL ANYONE - RICK, GLENN, MICHONE...

BUT CARL? NO WAY HE COULD SURVIVE WITH HALF FACE MISSING...

BE DECENT AND FINISH HIM ALREADY!!!

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER IN FULL TIME.

NEVER WILL READ TWD AGAIN!!!

Bruno Costa

I'm not fat.

Must be nice... :-)

NOW RICK SON IS DEAD????

NAH.....

I HATE YOU, ROBERT!!!! :(

He really hates his characters.

Is the only thing that comes to my mind right now...

He is projecting his frustrations on his characters. KILLING THEM. LOL

Victor Cabo

Is this a haiku, or just a letter written in the form of instant message?

I went to great lengths to make sure it was clear Carl was still alive at the end of 83! That hole in his head wasn't THAT big, was it? (Charlie!!!!)

Kirkman you son of a motherless goat!

I am FUCKING stuttering to myself as I am typing this letter out 'cause I just finished reading issue #83.

My heart is forever scarred after seeing that two page spread of Carl. I sit banging away on this keyboard in disbelief that Carl just took a load to his face.

I had been prepping myself mentally that the shit was going down and lives will be lost but never did I think that Carl will grow to one day look like Sloth from The Goonies.

I hate you. Sorry, I am just extra sensitive 'cause I have two little kids.

You Rock and I can't wait for the next issue!!

Glenn AKA PeasOfCrap

BTW, I heard Bendis was your babysitter as a kid. How old is that guy like 90? Is this true?

Bendis is in fact like 90 years old. I'm glad you're going to stick around to see Carl's eventual death.

What? Everybody dies.

Bendis just looks like he's 90.

Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you for ruining my day. As a comic book retailer, I have few comforts: the economy is crap and I have to struggle to feed my family. My job consists of hearing people bitch about the Red Hulk, the death of Johnny Storm, and the never-ending complaints about plural story arcs. For years now, The Walking Dead has been one of three monthly titles to bring me some joy. I've enthusiastically recommended The Walking Dead to everybody. I order the trade paperback volumes 3 at a time at both of my stores and can't keep them in stock. Oh, yeah, and the AMC mini-series is awesome -I still have the poster on my office door and the window clingy beside my open sign. Why did you feel the need to teabag me?

How dare you hurt Carl? I had to leave early today and stop by the liquor store because of you! I love your writing. I've probably sold more copies of Tech Jacket than any other retailer. But, really? This is how you repay me -a guy who peddles your wares to most of western North Carolina?

I have to ask, why did you feel the need to go all Stephen King on us and hurt someone we've come to love for 80+ issues? Carl could have been MY son, and I take shooting him in the face personally. Right now, I think you are a bastard. I'm sure it's just a device and Carl will live, but I feel like you shot my own daughter in the face. In 10-years I've never hoped anything in comics would be just a dream, but I'd sleep better at night if Rick simply woke up, realized he had dreamed it all, and caressed Carl's head as he slept. Hell, you can have Mephisto come in and erase everything for all I care!

I'm mad as hell, but, frankly, I rely on you, Mr. Kirkman. Please make this a bad dream!

-Eddie Price
Time Tunnel Comics and Toys, Hickory, NC. Plan 9 Comics and Games, Boone, NC.

PS: How about showing up at one of my Hickory Cons (www.hickorycon.com). But, even if you came in pro bono, I wouldn't forgive you for this Carl nonsense. Get this sorted out!

Eddie, no one sells more Tech Jacket than Shawn Kirkham. That man is a beast on the convention floor.

And we will send Shawn to Hickory Con as a Robert stand-in... deal?

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

What did you do to Carl, you heartless bastard!? Why, why, WHYYYYY????? Please, spare Carl, take his stupid father instead!

How do you expect me to work, sleep and lead a productive life during the rest of this month not knowing what will happen to Carl? Shame on you!

Yours sincerely,

Gabriel Fonseca

We expect you to do all these things AND tell all your friends about Skybound... so, let's hope you didn't disappoint us these past two months!

Just read 83 & as soon as I got to the Carl part I screamed what the fuck! I'm so pissed @ you Kirkman! God damn don't you know we love these characters! Best issue in a while! Thanks for writing a comic that @ issue 83 still has me hating you! That truly means you are the best author working today! Keep the surprises coming so we can keep sending you hate mail!

Sincerely,
Jim townsend
Port Richey, fl.

Robert, can you hold your end of this deal that Jim has proposed?

I don't honor the requests of people who prefer to hit "SHIFT" "2" instead of "a" "t" but maybe I'm just being unreasonable. THAT'S NOT A SHORT CUT JIM! It's NOT!!!!

HOW COULD YOU DO THAT!?

I mean we've been with him since the first issue and now,

just willy nilly, you kill him off? How could you do this to the fans? It's like you just kill characters to kill them. We've been tuning in for 83 issues to see what kind of danger he'll get into next and now it's all gone. The love Rick had for him was unmeasured and now it's just another thing he's lost. I too loved that hat, he was one of my favorite characters and now he's gone. Well I assume he's a goner, I mean no one's gonna want to wear a hat that's partly blown away and covered in brains.....no one.

I love your work but I don't know if I can continue reading after this, it just won't be the same.

Zack VanNatta
Dickeyville, Wisconsin

You clearly haven't seen my hat collection.

Dear Ms Regular Font and Mr Italics Font

I'm going to shoot you in the eye...

Ha... I'm totally calling Sina "Ms. Regular Font" from now on!

In this amazing modern age when near everything we watch is on a computer, digital recorder, DVD or related format and thus can be paused at any time; I have never paused because I was in shock. I could though. Pause the movie or TV episode and walk away until composed. However, nothing has ever had that impact. That moment where I can go no further. The moment that hits with enough force to knock me onto my feet so I can walk away. Nothing has that effect. Nothing but The Walking Dead.

Years ago you hit me when Lori was cut in half. I flipped to that page, stared at it in silence for what felt like hours. Then I threw the book to the floor and went to sleep, trying to convince myself that it was a nightmare. But no. With morning came revelation. Not only that yes, Lori is dead. But also the revelation that this is what comics, and all literature can be. If the book wasn't so damn well done I wouldn't care who died.

For the same reason, years later, I wouldn't care about Carl's fate. That page. The image. The hole. The very very tiny one word on this massive splash page of art. "Dad". Holy fuck, I don't know what to do! I set the book down and wandered the house. Drank a soda, looked out the window, flipping through the TV. If I don't turn the page then I don't have to move on, right?! It could be a dream again. Carl could be fine. It becomes a very adult version of "The Monster at the End of This Book". I pace the house wondering if I should wake up my girl and tell her, "Carl might be dead".

This is pen and ink! Carl (or Lori or Rick) doesn't exist in any way until Robert uncaps the pen or Charlie sharpens the pencil. They're not real! And yet they are.

Now we wait. This world that you created waits. Not the world of the Walking Dead, but the world of the fans. In this world where they say that print is dead, and where no one reads anymore. In this "amazing modern age" thousands, if not millions, are waiting every month for 30 pieces of paper. We hold our breath. We pray for a fictional character. We pause.

Thank you for creating literature.

Kevin Hellions
Rome, NY

Has anyone told you that you're kind of intense?

Gratuitous. Horrific means of delving the value of shock. Splashed it, even. Just shamefully lacking storytelling, milking those sorts of devices. Been with you for 83 issues now. Won't be back for 84.

BHunt

Doubt it. See you next month.

Seriously, though... we've been doing crazy graphic splash pages and two-page spreads since the beginning. To act like we've suddenly crossed a line is CRAZY. Remember the full page space of the two little girls with severed heads? How is this worse than that? TELL ME! Somebody tell me!!!!

Mr. Kirkman:

Are you fucking crazy??? A child eaten alive by zombies,

a pleading hand cut off with an axe and another child shot eyeless in the face??? Yes, Rick (and probably everybody else) are fucked up. They have the Goddamn right to be. First, they survive in a zombie world; second, they are fictional characters... But you do come up with all these situations!!! You are fucked up also. And worst because you sit comfortably in your suburban home with not a worry because you got an early life success and yet you think all those sick situations. I still get shivers down my spine. What the fuck is wrong with you???

Wow!! Got all these out of my system. Where was I??? Oh, yes. Keep up the good work. See you next month (or sooner). Thanks.

Paco González

Robert's from BACKWOODS, KENTUCKY. There is nothing suburban about his ramshackle home. His SUV, however, that is pretty suburban.

I gotta say, Paco... when you put it like that, well... you do make me think. What IS wrong with me? Eh...

Hardcore, man.

Dan Nadeau
Salem, MA

#Succinct

Thanks so much for writing, Dan. I'm very glad that you enjoyed the issue, assuming of course, that was a positive "hardcore" and not a negative "hardcore." You never can tell when it comes to a word like "hardcore."

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

After you killed of Eve in Invincible I wrote an email saying she was pregnant. After reading The Walking Dead 83 and seeing Carl missing half his face all I can say is, Thank You. No one else writes like this in comics anymore. I could care less if he lives or dies, just that you had the balls to go there is great. Didn't see that one coming at all. Andrea, Glenn, Michonne, Morgan, and pretty much everyone other than Rick and Carl were on my death list. I can't wait for that moment in the tv series.

Chris Trent

btw give Sophia the hat if he dies.

You know, I was really hoping to compile a bunch of e-mails that were cantankerous fans begging for Carl's life, but somehow all I'm finding are people still applauding Robert. What is up with that?

Ha! I win, Sina! I win! Brian Bockrath (he was pretty thrilled when he got a mention last time).

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Miss Grace.

Why I oughta...

THIS is why eye read the walking dead
THIS is why you are the best writer in comics
THIS is why amc wanted to make the show
you never fail to impress me. eye was really underwhelmed by no way out. expashaly that last iss hue, it was like skyline, were it was just people in a house debating to leave or not.

and just when eye was about to abandon ship BLAM you fucking suckerpunch me.

Eye think this issue has the third most charactor deaths.

(48 and 66 had more, right?)

anyways, i has a few questions:

1. the walking dead (and invincible) seem to be inspired by the savage dragon's style of linear story telling. are there any other savage dragon references in the series?

Always. Robert?

Seriously. I owe my career to Erik Larsen. When he created Savage Dragon I fell in love and have always considered it to be the BEST comic ever produced. I mean, it really is everything I've ever wanted out of a comic. There are loads of things I learned from Erik, stole from Erik, etc. in all my comics.

2. in invincible 33, did mark go to the walking dead's universe? i could have sworn i saw jim hanging with mark

around a camp fire.

Yes, obvi.

No, absolutely not. Ryan wanted to draw zombies, but there's no chance of there ever being a crossover between the two books and Walking Dead does NOT take place in a parallel universe to Invincible. So I had the zombies saying "meat." They don't say that here.

3. now that rick cut off jessi's hand and left her for dead, do you think if he ever uses the phone again, he would have a three way call with jessi and lori?

BEST IDEA

Ha. No.

it seems like if you decide to get in a relationship with rick, your gonna die horribly.

We'll see...

well thank you for your time.
eye cant wait to see how rick and co. get out of this one.

love dalton

p.s. now that carl has one eye, will he ever be able to experience glassesless 3D on the 3DS?

Oh man, Carl is going to miss out on THOR. Great.

Also: I printed this mainly because of how cray cray your writing is. Good work.

Thanks for writing your thoughts. I'll keep going on with some letters about issue 83 next month. Now please, flip this book over and read WITCH DOCTOR #0!!!!

Also: Australian fans roaming for Skybound books can now find them from local distributor MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT - www.madman.com.au/skybound - Available from all good bookstores.

We're taking over the world!

-Sina

**WITCH DOCTOR WITCH DOCTOR WITCH DOCTOR
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WITCH DOCTOR WITCH DOCTOR I just want to make
sure you guys read the preview coming up. It's a
GREAT book and I think you'll all enjoy it.**

-Robert Kirkman



GET INFECTED.

**ISSUE ONE
in stores
JUNE 29th!**

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Roamers!!

What's up? I'm gonna be less with the chit-chat (this is Regular Font Editor Sina Grace), and make it more about the oodles of fan mail we have to cover.

Robert will reply in italics.

We'll do a few Carl letters and then get back to normal mayhem.

Before we get started, I just wanted to pop in and discuss this Carl debacle a bit. All the letters we've gotten since issue 85 shipped have been largely along the lines of "Are you guys okay, I swear I love the book, those letter writers are jerks." First of all, everyone is entitled to their opinion and I completely understand if this book is too intense sometimes. Thankfully, we've gotten more than a few letters from people who wrote in complaining, now explaining that they acted harshly and are still very much on board for the book. Also, I've got a policy of printing nearly ALL the negative mail because it's more interesting to respond to. There are many "you guys rock" e-mails to balance those out--but this letters column would be way more boring than it usually is if every response was "Thanks."

In other news, filming just began on The Walking Dead Season 2 just days before I typed this. So everyone is back in Georgia working away on the show, and it's great to see the cast in action again. I'll be watching dailies from yesterday as soon as I finish typing this. Exciting!

Rest assured, the show is looking fantastic. In case you haven't heard, I've been working in the writers room full time this season, so I've had a much more active hand in shaping the story for the full 13 episode arc. I'm very proud of what we've been able to accomplish. Frank Darabont, Glen Mazzara, Evan Reilly, Scott Gimple, Angela Kang, David Leslie Johnson and I have been working for months to make this show as great as possible.

I can't wait for you all to see it.

But enough of that... let's talk about the comic.

No, no, no NO FUCKIN NO!! That is it. Mark this day, as the last day that Image Comics or Kirkman will get a single dime out of me. Issue 83 left me with such a bad mood that i will no longer be reading Invincible or buying anything else that is produced from their companies.

You say that now, but I know you're buying Witch Doctor #1 on June 29th.

I am done. I have been a very loyal fan, even before TWD came out, by reading Wizard and all the other magazine articles on it before first printing. I have bought every issue, and many if not all of the trades, and sent an email or two in to the letter hacks in the past. I even came off of my 7 YEAR self-imposed absence to cable TV and re subscribed last October JUST to see TWD on AMC.

I understand that in this crazy (yes, I realize it ain't real people) world people will die, and I fully expect a shocking death or two here and there to further the story...but this has gone too far. First it was two little girls decapitated, another little kid (Ben I think) gets killed later on, Rick and Lori's newborn blow to bits in a shot gun blast, Carl almost raped and then finally half his head blown off right after seeing another kid getting turned into zombie lunch.

I can fully get behind the "gritty survivalism"...the horrors of trying to make it in a fucked up world, but there is a difference between what started off as GOOD storytelling.. and what has turned into nothing more then throwing in a child's controversial death or image when the creativity well runs dry. You must not have kids, and thus do not understand the furious passion that

I (and others) feel when a 'child' is harmed just so you can make a dollar.

Robert has kids, haven't you checked out his Wikipedia entry?

The Governor, and cannibal storylines were very harsh, but understandable to an extent...however seeing Carl like that towards the end of 83 was such a blow to my core that I said enough. Now some readers who see this letter (if you chose to print it) will say 'hey, FU, these are his creations and he can kill 'em all if he wants'. Yeah, I know that. That has been covered many times in the past.. but you will have to get someone else to pay for Kiddie snuff.

Henry Winkler called and said he wants his leather jacket and water skis back now that the shark has been jumped.

J. Dickson.

So I take it you don't read Crossed?

In all seriousness, it takes these kinds of tragedies to bring the other characters back to life. The events in No Way Out allowed Rick to stop seeing the world as—eh just re-read issue 84 for the long speech.

Characters cannot grow if there isn't change.

I really do have to admit that I'm baffled by letters like these. One, Carl DIDN'T die... two, he's been shot before and three... oh, never mind. It's a double-edged sword. I'm flattered to have made you care so deeply about the characters... but I'd prefer you not threaten to quit the book every time something happens to one of the long surviving members of the cast.

I mean, what's going to happen when Michonne dies?!

-Thought Dad was dead
-Shot and killed Shane
-Was shot by Otis
-Rarely saw his father
-Reunited with his father, sans father's hand
-Had his mother and (half?) sister killed.
-Had to protect dying father
-Nearly got raped by bandits
-Watched father bite off the ear of a bandit
-Creeped out by a delusional Morgan.
-Killed Ben
-Gets shot in the mother fucking EYE!!!!

Part of me hopes he's dead so you can't hurt him anymore.

-Chris Hughes

Wow, when you put it like that...

What doesn't kill you makes you stronger...

Dear Mr. The Kirkman,

I read #84 while standing in the comic shop. If this keeps up you may surpass Spawn as my favorite comic.

Loving The Walking Dead more than ever,

Tim Essex

Good luck with that, as everyone knows SPAWN has always been my favorite comic, and sorry, Robert... but The Walking Dead has yet to come close to eclipsing it.

Wow, Sina... I never knew you loved Spawn so much. Maybe you should go work for Todd, what I'm trying to say is... you're fired. Maybe Brian Bockrath can move

over from AMC and take your job.

I love your work, and you seem like a genuinely nice guy (met you at Comic-Con last summer). For the first time in decades I've finally gotten into an ongoing comic series that I read every month (in case you're wondering, it's Walking Dead. Figured you already deduced that, but didn't want to assume). While I love Romero's masterpiece zombie films, am enthralled with Brooks' zombie books, and generally at least sample all things zombie, I read your books for the characters: I've now found myself shocked to be less interested in zombie attacks than character moments (though LOVE a good zombie kill).

OK, pleasantries out of the way (100% sincere as they are).

This is probably a stupid, mundane question, but I find myself wondering none-the-less. Now that Walking Dead is a bona fide TV hit, and there seems to be stability in producing the series for at least awhile longer, do you feel more pressure to deliver a great book monthly? I know as an artist you surely strive for 100% quality all the times, but I have to imagine there is a little more pressure to deliver now: great ongoing comics = more interest in the show where as declining quality in the books might cause viewers to tune out.

Along those lines, do you feel the need to, or get pressured by AMC execs, to formulate plot points based on television story arcs? For example, if you were inclined to kill off a major/popular character (say, Michonne), do you get flack from the suits because they want to milk the character for full fan value? I know (and LOVE) how the show arcs clearly go in their own direction separate from the comics: but now that you're writing the comics post-TV success do you feel tempted to change character tendencies, or even story lines, to better match the show? A recent example of this thinking is the Scott Pilgrim series. The movie went into production well before comic creator Bryan Lee O'Malley was finished mapping out the comic story. O'Malley has gone on record as stating he changed plot points in future comics based on the movie plot. I know Scott Pilgrim had a finite story where as Walking Dead seems to be endless. But do you get tempted (or pressured) to change future plot points to match the show (or please AMC)?

Thanks again for your great work. I look forward to the continuing stories!

Doug Crooks
San Diego, CA

I leave this one up to Robert...

Well, Doug... with the success of the comic, if anything... I feel MORE pressure to make things, y'know... good. There are more people than ever reading the comic now and I'd really like to keep those people. I always put the same amount of effort into the stories and I do try to keep things as lively as possible in the book.

And that's not to keep the ratings on the TV show up. I don't think it works that way, if the comic sucked and the show was great I think people would just stop reading the comic... they'd keep watching the show. If anything, having the TV show is making me focus on the comic that much more simply because I don't want things to change in the comic due to the TV show. Meaning, we fight to keep this book on time, because I hate it when comic book people sideline comics in the face of the almighty Hollywood. If anything, we're more committed to getting this book out on time. And story-wise, I certainly wouldn't want people to think all the good ideas were going into the TV show... I want this book to be better than ever and I'm doing all I can to make that happen.

Which sort of leads me to an answer to your final question. AMC, Frank Darabont and whoever- have absolutely no input into this comic. If they'd asked for it in our initial contract dealings on the show I'd have refused, and thankfully the folks at AMC are super smart and really good at what they do. They're wise enough to recognize that they turned this comic into a TV show for a reason... and the comic they were interested in wasn't mucked with by anyone, so where's the wisdom in mucking with it now?

Dear Rob and Sina,

It's actually RobERT and SinaTRA.

I was turned on to this amazing comic by the TV series that started airing last fall, and obviously I'm sending this to tell you that you guys have absolutely changed my life. I'm sure you hear this way too much, but this is the first comic I've ever read, and definitely won't be the last. I've read every single issue from #1 to #84, and your characterization and just overall ability to tell a story is unbelievable. I've learned to love the numbered question system so I'm just gonna jump in with that.

1. I'm finding that Abraham is filling the hole in my heart that was created by Tyreese's death...was it your intention to create someone that would do just that or am I the only one feeling this way??

No. Stop being weird.

In that I'm always trying to keep the cast full of interesting characters... you're a little right. But it's not like Abraham was meant to be slotted in after Tyreese's death as a replacement.

2. As an Atheist, I found the discussion/debate between Gabriel and Eugene in issue #63 to be really interesting...i don't think people have that discussion enough and it was really cool to see it in a comic.

This isn't a question.

Thanks.

3. I'm sure you're going crazy about all the letters you are getting about Carl getting shot, so I won't go on about it too much. It's not often that my jaw drops when reading something, but that really just made my jaw drop; I felt it and it was weird. It was one of the few times I have really been shocked (this and of course the end of the Woodbury story arc where you killed half of the characters). So well played sir!

I told him to do that.

(I didn't tell him to do that)

He didn't. AMC made me do that... it's all about ratings and demographics, I don't understand it, I just do what they tell me and cash the checks.

4. Have you read either World War Z or the Zombie Survival Guide? Max Brooks is an absolute genius, much like yourself.

No. Robert's said this before that because of the similarities he'd rather wait until he's done with The Walking Dead before breaking those books open.

The punch line is that Robert will never stop writing The Walking Dead, so he will never read the Max Brooks books.

He's a nice guy--if he did something that wasn't zombie-related, I'd read it!

5. This is where the letter might get a bit awkward...I just want to tell you that I love you (and Charlie) so much for making this perfect work of art. I'd like to tell you it's in a non-gay way, but I think I would be lying....

Well, at least you're questioning SOMething here...

How do you tell someone you love them in a gay way? In the form of a song?

Keep cranking them out, and I'll keep reading them. Again, all of you are my heroes.

Sincerely,

Ryan Parker
Troy, NY

Keep on reading, Ryan!

The Walking Dead is the first comic series I have ever read. I dabbled with others, but it was never really my thing. I have stuck by and kept reading even when I got annoyed in spots and raged like other fans at the end of Issue 83. In short, 84 was amazing and I burst into tears at the end. Thank you. Maybe it's just a woman thing (queue angry feminists). It had ass kicking and a well worded epiphany by Rick. Granted, in times of stress that can come out and I realize even with Hope the Walking Dead world is still the pits, but it was nice to see either way. I don't think I could have taken another "Oh look who died this issue" sort of thing. There is always next issue. Looking forward to Season 2 on AMC as well, even if I am still skeptical.

Susan
Charleston, SC

Don't be skeptical, Susan. The season is shaping up to be quite brilliant!

Maybe you can write AMC in the fall and tell them the show made you cry, too!

I think that's somewhat likely.

I saw Sina mentioning Segways, and that sparked an awesome idea! The Segway Dead! Thats right.. the dead are too lazy to move around on their own and all travel on segways! A new book by Kirkman where every character is Safe! Tired of all of Kirkman's characters dying, or almost dying? Well, read The Segway Dead!

- Jesse MacLeod

THIS is the fucking legacy I leave at Skybound? Yikes!

No comment.

Dear captain kirk,

I'm just a 13 year old boy who loves your comics. I stumbled upon the tv show when my 33 year old brother was watching it and loved it. I then found out the the tv show was adapted from the comic book. So being curious I bought one from borders and fell in love with it.

The character's emotions and feelings in the comic are so well written that I want to cry when I read them. The plot line is the best I have ever read or even seen in a movie. I love the comic more than I love the show. I also love how the comic is in black and white which represents the intensity of the events going around the characters.

Your comic book is my favorite piece of literature ever. I can't name a single thing I love more than your comic. This is my first time writing fan mail and I would greatly appreciate it if you would publish this in the next letter hacks. Both to you and your comic Mr.Kirkman, I say, bravo.

Your fan,
Steve Schmeltzer

This letter was drafted better than fan mail we get from a lot of middle aged fans!

But if you love The Walking Dead more than ice cream, dinosaurs, pizza, and extra allowance, then you're not a real 13 year old boy. Or you have not eaten dinosaur-shaped ice cream after pizza, which you paid for with the extra allowance your ma and pa gave you.

Or, you're an orphan with a dark past, and you just relate hardcore.

Maybe you should give SUPER DINOSAUR a try... there's less killing and stuff... but you might like it, too.

Hello Walking Dead crew.

I just read issue #84 and I was blown away. My imagination is going wild with the prospects of Rick's plans.

Also, there are a bunch of points in the storyline where you're just so proud of the characters... and this issue had a few of those moments. When it came down to the crucial moment Rick and his people are pretty much fearless. And the art was awesome too. I loved the two page piece with all 16 little panels across the top and the zombie-battle spread across the bottom half (p. 12-13).

Charlie's the best.

I also wanted to share a comic I recently got into. Northlanders has some of the best storytelling, action and art that I've seen in any comic. Have Sina or Robert or Charlie read it?

Sure we have! But now it's cancelled! Go write DC and try to get it back!

I haven't tried that book but I've enjoyed other things by Brian Wood, who writes that. So I'll try to give it a shot... it's on my Vertigo TO READ pile... which includes Scalped and American Vampire. They're doing good stuff over there these days. Hopefully Northlanders is the only one to get cancelled.

Rick should get a prosthetic frying pan on his arm, so he can always cook and he can bash the brains of zombies. Aaaand for the tv show's second season the theme music should be Slash and Buckethead dueling guitar solos to accompany a rap battle between Saul Williams and Rod Stewart.

So, issue 84 was great. Can't wait to see what happens next. I really hope Carl lives...

Matt
Ontario, Canada

As much as I enjoy reading fan thoughts for music cues in the show, I did not fully appreciate your reference. Maybe I'm getting old...

This letter sure did take a turn in the last half.

Mr. Kirkman,

I just wanted to write in and say that Issue 84 of The Walking Dead is the best issue of any comic I have read in a long while. Everyone rallying together to stand by Rick in his moment of desperation was touching and exciting, and I was left gaping for quite a while at the two-page splash of the survivors standing amongst hundreds of dead roamers. My heart was racing faster and faster with each turn of the page, and Rick's soliloquy in the final moments of the issue gave me chills.

So great job to you and everyone involved. Mr. Adlard and Mr. Rathburn did an especially great job on the final pages; I don't think I've ever been so interested in every single panel of a two-page spread that has nothing but a single character speaking.

Every once in a while I start to worry that this series will run out of interesting places to go, but this issue shattered any doubts I had about the future of The Walking Dead. I am so excited about this series right now, and I can't wait to see where it goes.

Thank you,
Taylor

Robert won't let me dole out compliments, so sometimes I have to find a letter that sums up how I feel about his books. Good work last issue, Robert! As for issue 86, eh...

They can't all be Spawn.

Guys, I've been read WD for the last Year and am right up to date now, It was great reading the story from the start, Ricks wake up, His old House, the walled community , The farm house and the prison . Loved all of it, relentless Horror, Great storyline's thrilling events. BUT come on Guys, has Rick and Co just gone stupid? They are in a New walled Community, Andria is off in the bell tower as watch out. The Walkers are starting to build up around the fence, being drawn to the sound of gunfire. and nobody but nobody thinks to cause an explosion someware away from the fence, a few gunshots from a far off roof will have the dead charging towards the sound. But nobody thinks of this? Come on lads, it was the Intelligence to TWD that has Me still reading, But " No Way Out" has been just Stupid.

By the way: Let that Psycho Carl die, It will be a release for all of Us.

Thanks, Looking forward to the clever storyline comming back.

Brian.
Dublin, Ireland.

I love the random use of capital letters and crazy spelling.

Robert, do you want to defend yourself?

Wasn't that Andrea's plan exactly? To draw them away from the fences... and didn't they do just that, standing at the end of the road and firing guns? Am I missing something?

Hello

Ok I got this at lunch and read it at my desk... wow... I have a 7 year old boy Jake and this story line kinda hits a key note and wow...

That closing speech of Ricks is outstanding...

Wow almost crying at my desk ... wow ...

many many thanks

Peter

Susan from Charlseton, SC has tissue for you!

Thanks again for continuing to write in. You're all the best!

We leave you with a flipbook for Richard Starkings' Elephantmen!

And, please, check out skyboundent.com for our Comic-Con details! We've got so many awesome surprises planned!

xxxo

-Sina

Do give Elephantmen a read, will you. Richard Starkings and crew have been hard at work on this series for a long time now and it never fails to deliver. I wanted to take an issue and shine a spotlight on this very entertaining series.

There are many collected editions already available to order. Give it a shot!

Thanks,

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Dearest Roamers,

If you're reading this, then you're probably thinking what I'm thinking:

Wow, it's been a whole year since the craziness that was issue 75.

At least, that's what I'm thinking. As you dig through this issue of The Walking Dead, I'm in San Diego pulling my hair out while getting the chance to meet hundreds of your awesome faces. A year ago, I was here alone, and now we have Shawn Kirkham, and Brian Bockrath. This isn't a milestone, but it's sort of worth noting.

Are Shawn and Brian helping with the letters now? Awesome. As you read this, I too, will be in San Diego and Comic-Con International. And while Sina is getting ulcers running the booth, I'll more than likely be sitting in a chair talking, or walking to a chair so I can sit in it and talk.

Letters?

Letters!

Hey, Sina and Robert,

Man, I just saw the letters page of issue 85, and it looks like some people are pretty pissed off about Carl getting shot in the face. I'm glad you left their letters unedited, I really got a kick out of that.

So! Just let me go ahead and praise you for that one, Kirkman. One of the reasons Walking Dead is a good read is that anything can happen... To anyone. If anything, I'm kind of pissed off that Carl isn't dead right off. It's pretty unrealistic that a kid could get half his face blasted off and not get killed from the shock alone, not to mention the wound itself. And yes, I'm aware of the statistic about gunshot victims getting a round in the head and how often people survive, but come on. This is a zombie comic! Headshot equals dead! Those are the rules. I guess he could suffer a lingering death from infection or something, but I think both you and I know that isn't going to happen. If you were gonna kill him with the headshot, he'd be dead already. There's no drama in keeping him around for a while, only to go out in an anti-climax. So clearly he's gonna survive (for now). I hope you don't go back to this well again for a long time by the way, 'cause I don't think I'll buy it if this happens again. Headshot equals dead. Just sayin'.

I feel like the angle was a little misleading. The sketches I saw of the wound (because you know, that's what Robert does) was more portion of face than half. Even if Carl dies, you'll see exactly how his face pans out.

Look at the spread again, really. All that black area--that's Carl's head, the bullet went in diagonally through his eye to his temple, there's a lot of his head left there. Really.

One more thing: I don't know if you remember (I doubt it), but I wrote you back when the gang was holed up in the prison. I complained that the incredibly long stay they had there made the book seem stagnant and unmoving, and you spoiled a lot of the urgency and drama a good zombie book needs (and I stand by that). Thankfully you threw some chaos into the mix — and how! — and I think the comic was much better for it. Killing Lori and the unborn baby was pretty rough, but hey, it's a zombie apocalypse. These things happen. And they should happen, because otherwise it's boring.

Anyways, I bring this up because I'm concerned you're going down this road again. I can understand why Rick would want to do everything he can to help build a real society, but honestly, a zombie book where everyone spends 99% of their time holed up in a fortress is pretty unappealing to me. If there's little chance all hell can break loose, what are we in this for? Now, I know what you're gonna say. We just had the chaos where the zombies got in and tore shit up, right? Well, I think that means it's all the more unlikely something like that will happen again soon. Everyone's gonna be too safe, and it kills the essential tension you need for this to work.

On top of that, Rick's madness has been way too wishy-washy. Lori's death should have either broken him or not, not some kind of weird half-measure where you feel compelled to remind us once in a while that he does indeed hear voices, but nothing ever comes of it. A guy that hears voices is, when you get right down to it, straight up crazy, but Rick sure doesn't act like it. It's too much of a half-measure for my taste.

So if you ask me, I would suggest you should get everyone out of the

community at some point (and sooner rather than later at that). Otherwise, you're either going to have to have them turn on themselves or get invaded again. And another invasion already would be too repetitive. I suppose they could get infiltrated, though... Well, whatever. You get the point, I'm sure.

You also have to have Rick either get over Lori's death more or less completely, or break down into a tiny nub of a man. Half-measures aren't what this book ought to be about, don't you think? I think you're on the right track, since with issue 85 we're seeing him get stronger, not weaker. Just pick crazy or not crazy then stick with it, that's all I'm saying.

In the meantime, keep up the good work,

Ben P

P.S. I don't mean to sound like a demanding comic book fan or anything, by the way... Just thought I'd try and offer up some (constructive?) criticism. I only do that for things I like, so there you go.

All I can really say is thanks for the criticism it's all duly noted. And really, at this point, we're 87 issues into this thing. Have I earned no trust? Just have faith, man. We're always going to be breaking new ground. The community is not going to be just like the prison, Rick's madness is leading to something, and the book will always be interesting... because, first and foremost, I have to have interesting things to write and Charlie has to have interesting things to draw. Otherwise we'd get pretty dang bored... and so would you.

Dear author,

As you mentioned in some letter hacks, you seem to like "realistic" suggestions so I have a couple (they're probably stupid, sorry about that)

1) how about scorbut ? After a year or two of eating mostly bean or corn cans, aren't the people around likely to develop very bad diseases like scorbut or something ? (same for dental need, especially for kids)

Fans: he means Scurvy. This isn't a pirate book. Potatoes have vitamin C. So do supplements.

Yeah, getting into the diet of it all... seems a little too technical and boring. There are vitamins around and things like that. Admittedly, I should probably touch on that, but we went a long time without pointing out where they were getting toilet paper or even if they were using it. We'll skip over the little things from time to time.

2) also as it was shown in World War Z, it's very likely that at least some government facilities have managed to survive (the same way they would have in case of nuclear winter) so don't you think that the remaining surviving forces would try to either enslave the civilians to constitute some kind of liberation army or worse, use them as work force in some kind of islands of civilization?

Thanks for ruining WWZ for me. What kind of continuing story of survival horror would it be if they were just mimicking another book?

RIGHT.

3) How about those special lamps or radios developed for third world countries which run with dynamo (as the yellow radio used in 28 days later) or are solar powered.

How about them, indeed...

4) It seems weird to me that the survivors never tried to find leather clothes, or build some protection to protect them from zombie bite

They do what they can, given the circumstances of always being on the run. There was the riot gear for a minute, and Rick's ultra slick leather jacket keeps him immune from zombie bites, a la Fonzie pre-shark jumping.

anyway, I'm sure you're sick of fan mails like that so never mind and please keep it as good as it is :)

Djamé, a faithful reader from France

J'deteste your letter. J'J/K!

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm not commenting on issue #85, I'm commenting on your responses in the Letter Hacks pages. You think you are soooooo great because you got everybody upset by shooting Carl in the eye. This is nothing new. We were all shocked by George Romero back in 1968 when he shot Ben at the end of the movie. You're just riding Romero's coat-tails by doing something shocking. What you did to Carl doesn't even have a social statement to it. Anyone can write something cruel and hurt a character, but what does it mean? It's just like Rick's arm chopped off, the 2 little girls dead, Carl shot in the eyeball. I don't see any social value or lesson in the things that you do. It's a GOOD comic book, with some shocks, but nothing new. Maybe a prisoner turned good for a few issues and got killed, I don't know. Carl's shooting Shane was good, Dale's leg gets eaten, Carl shooting that little psycho kid was good, some deep shit maybe 25% interesting at best. But the rest is soap opera shit, who's fucking who. Bullshit! Your characters come and go so fast I can't even remember half of them. You just write a comic book, using shock and personal "filler" with mostly no sense of good storytelling that will last the test of time. I wish you would really say something with my favorite comic book The Walking Dead. Until then you will always be in George Romero's shadow and this book will never stand the test of time as Romero's stories have. I love your book, I will continue reading it. But why don't you do something with this book that people will remember and talk about forever. And the way you treat your fans comes across as arrogant and disrespectful. I know you think your being cute and it's all funny but it's not. Despite your success, you are blowing it. I've yet to see something great in this book because... you are not that great. So treat your fans right, you would be nothing without them. The only reason I read your book is there is no other zombie comic around and I like zombies. You won't print this, and if you do you'll just tear me a new asshole for shits and giggles. You like to upset people but in the long run I think your work is without substance and hollow. And you get too many kicks hurting your fans. You could have said "I'm sorry, but please wait, there's more." Instead you tease them to stick around to see Carl die. You should take a look at yourself in what you write in the book AND on the back pages. You could do better with both. I'm sure you WON'T print this and maybe you just CAN'T rise to the occasion an and make this book all that it can be. I hope I'm wrong because I LOVE this book. Please make it important to read. Always a fan.

Sincerely,
Victor Gaspar

Damn girl. Robert, wanna take this?

Note: Saying "I bet you won't print this" is a challenge I'll ALWAYS take.

Victor, thanks for writing. I may joke around a little in these letters columns, but I really don't think I've given the impression that I don't value the fans or like the fans or appreciate the fans. I do. I even value your opinion. If you want to tell me Romero is better, I'll take it, hell, I agree. If you want to tell me Romero will stand the test of time better than The Walking Dead... sure, I can go for that. At the end of the day, I'm having fun, telling a story how I want to tell it.

Trying to tell people how bad consumerism is, or griping about corporate-run America, or trying to preach to an audience in any way, just doesn't interest me. I have opinions, and at times they seep through into the work, but I'm only trying to entertain.

If you feel entertainment has no value unless it's also delivering a social message... that's a valid opinion, but that doesn't mean I'm going to suddenly agree with you and start trying to use this book to get Ralph Nader elected... I feel things like that would alienate the majority of people reading this book.

I hope you keep reading and I'm sorry if I've given you the impression that I don't appreciate you. Sincerely, thanks for writing.

Dear Robert and Sina,

It's been a while since I had bought comics, so when I finally got around to it yesterday, there were 3 issues of TWD waiting for me. Just read them in one sitting, which is quite awesome.

Particularly, 83 was such an intense shocker of an issue. I bet you heard that a zillion times by now. It is, as far as I'm concerned, a total game changer for this book. The moment that really changed the way I will read this book was when Rick left Jessie and her kid to die (after nearly chopping off her hand too!) It was foreshadowed in the final scene of #82, but I never expected Rick to live up to those words so soon. I lost almost all the respect I had for that man when I read that scene. What he did was so horrible, so loathsome that I stared at that page for I don't know how many minutes. Just minutes earlier he had told this woman that he liked her. 'Like' liked her. And then he left her to die a horrible death by a herd of zombies. Every man for himself, eh?

If this was facebook, he would have clicked the "unlike" button right before hacking her arm off.

From that moment on I saw this book in a different light than I had before. When Carl got shot and Rick was all in shock and tears, I couldn't give a damn for his loss. Don't get me wrong, I love Carl as a character in his own right. And I hope he will survive, for he is an interesting character with lots of depth. But as far as empathy from me for Rick's situation goes; there was one. And believe me, when it comes to tearjerkers, parents grieving over the loss of their children is in the top 3. It always gets to me big time, in real life, and in any form of fiction, even when it is badly written. I've seen it happen and haven't been able to let it go ever since. But this time? After Rick

left a person he loved to die in such a cold blooded manner, I had nothing. Almost felt like saying, "You had that coming." I despise him as a person, and wouldn't trust him anymore.

And how is he repaid when he himself is in trouble a bit later, fighting of the horde of zombies to save his son's life? People from all over town come to his aid. He would have left them and their kids to

die, but when he is in trouble they all come to help him. He really didn't deserve that. At least Carl and the doctor lady are also saved, at least there is that, so their help is not wasted on just this despicable selfish man. I really got a bit angry when he later talks about hope and such. I used to admire Rick, because he was always there for his people. Even when he had to make tough, and unpopular, or morally ambiguous decisions. But he seems to have lost that. I know heat of the moment, extreme situations and all that. But chopping of Jessie's hand? The old Rick would have found a better way or at least he would have tried. But this Rick told a mother to abandon her child. I am actually hoping this secret will get out. It should prove interesting.

Don't worry I won't quit the book over this or over Carl's, as of yet uncertain, fate. The sheer fact that this book made me feel so angry and sad, is a testament to your skills (all of you). I love it when a story really gets to me, and time and again, TWD does just that.

Keep up the good work!

Jeroen Fellingner

Robert talks a lot about Rick's transformation in the upcoming Abrams book The Walking Dead Chronicles. I don't think readers will ever see "the old Rick," or the more chivalrous guy that Andrew Lincoln is portraying... but that's part of the long term evolution of a comic book character.

And let's just take note that Rick did in fact SAVE Carl by doing that. Jessie wouldn't let go of Ron, he was being eaten by zombies--he was dead, and she was holding onto Carl, slowing them down. Had Rick not done what he did--they all would have died. He did something that will haunt him forever, in order to save his son's life. Then he willingly dove back into the fray to protect Carl and Denise as she worked on him. In the world of The Walking Dead... that's about as close to hero as you can get... right?

I think if Rick was completely unaffected by his actions, I'd agree with you, he'd be despicable. But I hope you find it in your heart to see his side of things.

My favorite thing about this book at this point is that it's becoming harder and harder to understand the motivations of these characters. We SEE them living in this world, but we don't ourselves go through anything close to what they do in our everyday lives. So if you think about everything that's happened to Rick... it makes his decisions a little more understandable, but you really have to consider what he's been through, from day one, and that's tough.

Hi guys. I'm writing this from my Nokia N900 while lying in bed in agony with a possibly torn rotator cuff - reading comics hurts, holding the phone up hurts, typing hurts but I gotta share. I actually sorta enjoyed Carl getting shot in the head in issue 83, I mean there's only so much zombie peril I can take without getting bored, but a good bit of brain damage to the main cast livens anything up. (Oooh, does the shot through the head now make Carl zombie proof? I mean that shot looks like it would take down most zombies ...)

But anyway, my point is, Carl getting shot was fine but the letters page in issue 85 sort of freaked me out and disturbed me more than a little. It's only Carl! I mean obviously I wept when Dale died, but that was Dale. Why all this weird Carl love? Getting accidentally shot in the head while fleeing zombies isn't exactly shocking for this book, the kid should be prepared for that shit every time he walks out the door.

Nighty night, time for my pain pills I think.

Sarah

Okay, first of all: I want whatever Sarah's on that she can write such good fan mail on a Nokia N900!

Secondly: you should be on more of whatever you're on, so's you're not in agony.

Thanks for ruining your body to read Skybound books.

You should update us! I hope you're doing well.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Gotta say I was surprised by the back lash due to Carl's "Wound". That two page spread in #84 made me put the book down for a second. That and the aftermath in #85 is what storytelling is all about.

The work you're doing, along other creators like Eric Powell and Ben Templesmith give me hope for the industry. The trio listed has got me working on my own book for internet publication.

Yeah! And for you new comic book readers, the creators mentioned above are definitely worth checking out! After all of Robert's other books, obviously.

I've been buying comics my entire life and my status as a starving, jobless, college student makes that an expensive addiction, but TWD will for ever be in my pull list. Thank you.

p.s Witch Doctor is awesome.

Highfives and akward looks,
Korie M.F.N Conyers

The pages from Witch Doctor 3 and 4 that have been coming in look PHENOMENAL. I hope you have that on your pull list, too!

AND THE AWARD FOR BEST LINE OF DIALOGUE GOES TO:

ROBERT KIRKMAN FOR:
"Koff! Ng"

Congrats!

Now on to business,

This episode in the Walking Dead dramedy was surprisingly disappointing, well actually no, wrong word. It was a bit... mundane, nothing truly plot developing happened except the whole affair between honest Abe and Rosita. I feel like I could go read issue 84, then pick up issue 86 and not feel like i missed anything. 2.99 is a lot of money.

But then again, I did also get a very cool witch doctor story, so that was pritty awesome.

You hear that, Brandon and Lukas!? You’re pritty awesome!

ok enough with all that tomfoolery, on to my questions.

1. You already established invincible and science dog exist as comics in the walking dead, so is it possible for the walking dead to be a comic in super dinosaur?

Whoa... no?

Yeah, no.

2. Why in the world are you doing Rise of the Governer? Just... seems kinda odd, didn’t you say that you weren’t gonna do stuff like that? I really liked the character- he’s like the joker of The Walking Dead. With an eye patch if you were gonna do a back story book on him, it would have been cooler if it was like the killing joke or something.

Some stories need to be told. Robert’s holding on pretty strong to not deviating from the comic book (no one-shots, no mini-series, no crazy tie-ins), but when you have the opportunity to revisit a fan favorite with the help of Jay Bonansinga... how do you say no?

Check back in old letters columns. I’ve talked about the possibility of doing novels for years.

Ah who am I kidding? i might as well just give you the 24.99 right now. Hell, just take my wallet.

kthx

3. How in the world did you get such a nice beard? I mean seriously, that things masterful.

Robert, say something funny.

Laziness.

4. Now that the CDC has officially released a zombie survival thingie... that can only mean that the zombie apocalypse is coming soon. Do you have any plans to publish your books during that time? Because that would be awesome if I could get a new Invincible after killing some zombies.

So long as Skybound employees remain in the company’s overly-protected domicile, then DUH yes.

Now I’m going to answer a question for you.

The two page splash of Carl shot in the face is worse than the one of two girls getting their heads cut off, because we cared about Carl. We saw him grow up. for readers, its like we grew up with him. We saw him go through horrible things, and still come out strong. He’s the heart of this. It was tragic to see some thing so horrible and life threatening happen to him.

Those girls were just Hershel’s daughters. That’s all we knew about them. Sure, it was gory and messed up, and made us hate tom tom, but the girls seemed more like card board cut outs than actual characters.

You’re welcome.

As always thanks for your time,

love,
dalton.

p.s. If Carl lives and gets an eye patch, he should grow a beard and act like rooster cogburn.

Eye patches are very fashionable this year.

Dalton- love your thoughts, but I don’t care much for your p.s. Not gonna lie.

Sina doesn’t like True Grit?

Dearest Abraham,

Smooth bro... Real smooth. Rosita is way too good for you, you raging douche. You are still the man though.

**From the desk of Abraham Ford:
SHUT THE FUCK UP! *slams door***

*Heh.
See, we love our fans.*

Kirkman and Co.,

I dug Rick’s venting, this is the first time in

a while (since the prison escape) where Rick actually seemed sorry for raging out. I guess guilt can be a strange and powerful thing in the land of the dead. Who knew?

Charlie, I loved the funeral spread. The darks and shadows really sing here, you can’t help but feel pulled into it.

Keep `em coming, and you KNOW I’m counting down the days till Season 2... Until then (and after of course) I’ll catch ya in Letterhacks.

Cam Stylez

Thanks for writing in, Cam. We miss you.

Give it up for Charlie Adlard! Charlie is the best!

Sorry bout that

But you really pissed me off...

And it was not `cause of an imminent death of Carl. It was cause his imminent survival.

How could a person would survive covered with zombie’s blood and half face missing?

It was a miracle that the doctor could clean up with lack of medical supplies... Still hoping that Carl turn into a zombie - but knowing that he’s not in a huge fever - by issue 85 - I’m beginning to lose hope of that happens.

So I’ve lied... I’ve read the comics and you are not fat... ...and Carl must be a cyborg...

Regards,
Bruno Costa

Cyborgs... that’s new!

When was it said that they don’t have medical supplies in the community. We see heart monitors and IV bags, and Doctor Denise Cloyd is a surgeon. These people are skilled.

Good Afternoon TWD crew.

May I make a suggestion?

Release a one shot composed entirely of angry letters about issue 83. I’d buy it.

See you next month (just like all those weiners)

-Jordan Bourne

Only if I can illustrate the letters.

Only if Sina doesn’t illustrate the letters.

Hey Sina & Robert,

I ran into Robert on the steps of my hotel in Hollywood yesterday and totally geeked out. It was really awesome to be able to meet Robert. I was too caught off guard to bring up the destruction of half of Carl’s face but it’s ok. After what happened to Lori and Judith, Carl’s predicament didn’t traumatize me as much.

I mentioned to Robert that I’m really glad that you guys are supporting digital delivery. I’m not the kind of guy who goes in and buys individual issues at the comic book store. I’ll buy the trades usually. Recently though I have been buying more individual issues through the Walking Dead and Comixology apps and reading them on my iPhone and iPad on the subway. These days I’ll buy other digital comics that I probably wouldn’t have before because I am looking for a fix until the next Walking Dead. When a hugely popular comic like Walking Dead supports digital distribution, you are getting more people used to digital distribution and making them more inclined to support other great artists that are trying to get new comics off the ground. So... Keep it up :) Speaking of which, I checked out that preview issue of Witch Doctor and really liked it. Will that be available digitally?

Yup! Same day as it arrives in stores! So buy a hard copy for a friend, and download it for your commute!

One more question since I blew it when I saw Robert. Can you divulge any details about the Walking Dead game by Telltale? How involved are you with that? I know you have a ton on your plate. Let me know if you need a zombie fiction addicted game producer on your end to help with approvals ;)

Best, Charles

By the time you read this, the fine folks at Telltale will have divulged some AWESOMENESS on you vis a vis Comic-Con. So... just look for SDCC coverage. It’s way better than Robert spilling beans.

Thanks as always for writing in. It was good to devote some hardcore pages to this ongoing Carl debate.

Check out the next few pages for a preview of this fall’s smash novel, The Walking Dead: The Rise of the Governor! Written by Robert and Jay Bonansinga, you’re gonna be craving more! (I should know- I’ve already read it, AND have a galley copy made exclusively for Comic-Con. #jobperks)

xoS

I hope you kids dig the book!!

-Robert

CHAPTER TWO

The graceful two-story Colonial that Philip selected for their extended pit stop sits on a manicured side street deep in the tree-lined labyrinth of a gated enclave known as Wiltshire Estates.

Situated off Highway 278, about twenty miles east of Atlanta, the six-thousand acre community is carved out of a forest preserve of dense longleaf pine and massive, old, live oaks. The southern boundary fronts the vast, rolling hills of a thirty-six hole golf course designed by Fuzzy Zoeller.

In the free brochure, which Brian Blake found on the floor of an abandoned guard shack earlier that evening, a flowery sales pitch makes the place sound like a Martha Stewart wet dream: Wiltshire Estates provides an award-winning lifestyle with world-class amenities... named the “Best of the Best” by GOLF Magazine Living... also home to the Triple-A Five Diamond Shady Oaks Plantation Resort and Spa... full time security patrols... homes from \$475,000 to 1 million-plus.

The Blake party happened upon the fancy outer gates at sunset that day -- on their way to the refugee centers in Atlanta -- all of them crammed into Philip's rust-pocked Chevy Suburban. In the spill of the headlights, they saw the fancy cast iron finials and great arched legend with the Wiltshire name hammered in metal across the spires, and they stopped to investigate.

At first, Philip thought the place might serve as a quick pit-stop, a place to rest and maybe forage for supplies before completing the last leg of the journey into the city. Perhaps they would find others like them, other living souls, maybe a few good Samaritans who would help them out. But as the five tired, hungry, wired, and dazed travelers made an initial circle of the winding roads of Wiltshire, with the darkness quickly closing in, they realized that the place was, for the most part, dead.

No lights burned in any of the windows. Very few cars remained in the driveways or at the curbs. A fire hydrant gushed at one corner, unattended, sending a foamy spray across a lawn. At another corner, an abandoned BMW sat with its shattered front end wrapped around a telephone pole, its twisted passenger door gaping open. People had apparently left in a hurry.

The reason they left, for the most part, could be seen in the distant shadows of the golf course, in the gullies behind the resort, and even here and there on the well-lighted streets. Zombies shambled aimlessly like ghostly remnants of their original selves, their slack, yawning mouths letting out a rusty groan which Philip could hear well enough, even through the sealed windows of the Suburban, as he circumnavigated the maze of wide, newly-paved roads.

The pandemic or the act of God -- or whatever the hell started it all up -- must have hit Wiltshire Estates hard and fast. Most of the undead seemed to be off in the berms and pathways of the golf course. Something must have happened there to speed the process. Maybe golfers are mostly old and slow. Maybe they taste good to the undead. Who the hell knows? But it was apparent, even from hundreds of yards away -- glimpsed through trees or over the tops of privacy fences -- that scores, maybe hundreds, of undead had congregated in the vast complex of clubhouses, fairways, footbridges, and sand traps.

In the dark of night, they resemble insects lazily swarming a hive.

It's disconcerting to look at, but somehow the phenomenon has left the adjacent community, with its endless circuit of cul-de-sacs and curving lanes, relatively deserted. And the more Philip and his wide-eyed passengers circled the neighborhood, the more they began to long for a small chunk of that award-winning lifestyle, just a taste, for just long enough to replenish themselves and recharge.

They thought that they could maybe spend the night here, get a fresh start in the morning.

They chose the big Colonial at the bottom of Green Briar Lane because it seemed far enough away from the golf course to avoid the attentions of the swarm. It had a big yard with good sight lines, and a high, sturdy privacy fence. It also seemed empty. But when they carefully backed the Suburban across the lawn and up to a side door -- leaving the vehicle unlocked, the keys in the ignition -- and they snuck in a window, one by one, the house almost immediately started working on them. The first creaking noises came from the second floor, and that's when Philip had sent Nick back to the Suburban for the assortment of axes stored in the back well.

* * *

"I'm telling you, we got 'em all," Philip is saying now, trying to calm his brother down, who sits across the kitchen in the breakfast nook.

Brian doesn't say anything, just stares at his bowl of soggy cereal. A bottle of cough medicine sits nearby, a quarter of which Brian has already chugged down.

Penny sits next to him, also with a bowl of Captain Crunch in front her. A little stuffed penguin the size of a pear sits next to her bowl, and every now and then Penny moves her spoon to the toy's mouth, pretending to share her cereal with the thing.

"We checked every inch of this place," Philip goes on as he throws open cabinet after cabinet. The kitchen is a cornucopia, brimming with upper class provisions and luxuries: gourmet coffees, immersion blenders, crystal goblets, wine racks, handmade pastas, fancy jams and jellies, condiments of every variety, expensive liqueurs, and cooking gadgets of every description. The giant Viking range is spotless, and the massive sub-zero refrigerator is packed with expensive meats and fruits and spreads and dairy products and little white Chinese carryout boxes full of still-fresh leftovers. "He might have been visiting a relative or something," Philip adds, making note of a nice single-malt Scotch sitting on a shelf. "Might've been with his grandparents, staying over at a friend's house, whatever."

"Holy freaking Jesus, look at this!" Bobby Marsh exclaims across the room. He stands in front of the pantry, and he's lustily inspecting the goodies inside it. "Looks like Willy-damn-Wonka and the Chocolate Factory in here... cookies, lady fingers, and the bread's still fresh."

"The place is safe, Brian," Philip says, pulling the bottle of Scotch down.

"Safe?" Brian Blake stares at the tabletop. He lets out a cough and cringes.

"That's what I said. Matter of fact, I'm thinking --"

"Just lost another one!" a voice pipes in from the other side of the kitchen.

It's Nick. For the past ten minutes, he's been nervously surfing through the TV channels on a little plasma screen mounted under a cabinet to the left of the sink, checking the local stations for updates, and now, at a quarter to 12:00 Central Standard Time, Fox 5 News out of Atlanta has just crumbled into snow. All that leaves on the cable box -- other than national networks showing reruns of nature programs and old movies -- is Atlanta's stalwart, CNN, and all they're showing at the moment are emergency robo-announcements, the same warning screens with the same bullet points that have been airing for days. Even Brian's Blackberry is giving up the ghost, the signal very spotty in this area. When it does work, the device is full of blind emails and Facebook tags and anonymous tweets with cryptic messages such as:

...AND THE KINGDOM WILL BE IN DARKNESS...

...IT'S THE BIRDS FALLING FROM THE SKY, THAT'S WHAT STARTED IT...

...BURN IT ALL DOWN BURN IT ALL...

...BLASPHEMIES AGAINST GOD...

...U SUCK U DIE...

...THE HOUSE OF THE LORD HAS BECOME A DWELLING PLACE OF DEMONS...

...DON'T BLAME ME FOR THIS I'M A LIBERTARIAN...

...EAT ME...

"Turn it off, Nick," Philip says gloomily, plopping down on a chair in the breakfast nook with his bottle. He frowns and reaches around to the back of his belt, where his pistol is digging into the small of his back. He lays the Ruger on the table and thumbs the cap off the Scotch, then takes a healthy swig.

Brian and Penny both stare at the gun.

Philip puts the cap back on the bottle, then tosses the Scotch across the kitchen to Nick, who catches it with the aplomb of an All-State second basemen (which he once was). "Tune into the all-booze channel for a while... you need to get some sleep, stop watching screens."

Nick takes a taste. He takes another one, then caps the bottle and tosses it to Bobby.

Bobby nearly drops it. Still standing at the pantry, he is busily wolfing down an entire package of Oreos, the black crust already forming in the corners of his mouth. He washes the cookies down with a big pull of single-malt, and lets out a grateful belch.

Drinking is something Philip and his two friends are accustomed to doing together, and they need to do it tonight more than ever. It started in their Freshman year at Burke County, with creme de menthe and watermelon wine in pup tents in each others' back yards. Later, they graduated to boilermakers after football games. Nobody can hold his liquor like Philip Blake, but the other two men are close rivals in the juicer sweepstakes.

Early in his married life, Philip would go out carousing with his two high school buddies on a regular basis, mostly to remind himself what it was like to be young and single and irresponsible. But after Sarah's death, the three men drifted apart. The stress of being a single parent, and working days at the muffler shop, and nights driving the freightliner with Penny in the sleeper compartment, had consumed him. The boys' nights out became less and less frequent. Once in a while, though -- in fact, as recently as last month -- Philip still found time to meet Bobby and Nick down at the Tally Ho or the Wagon Wheel Inn or some other Waynesboro dive for an evening of good natured debauchery (while Mama Rose watched Penny).

In recent years, Philip had started wondering if he was just going through the motions with Bobby and Nick to remind himself that he was alive. Maybe that was why, this past Sunday -- when the feces hit the fan in Waynesboro, and he decided to take Penny and shuffle off to a safer place -- he rounded up Nick and Bobby for the journey. They felt like a piece of his past, and that helped somehow.

He had never intended to take Brian along, though. Bumping into Brian had been an accident. That first day on the road, about forty miles west of Waynesboro, Philip had taken a quick detour into Deering, to check on his mom and dad. The elderly couple lived in a retirement community near the Fort Gordon military base. When Philip arrived at his folks' little townhouse, he found that the entire population of Deering had been moved to the base for safekeeping.

That was the good news. The bad news was that Brian was there. He was holed up in the deserted townhouse, huddling in the basement crawlspace, petrified by the growing number of walking dead in the backcountry. Philip had almost forgotten about his brother's current status: Brian had moved back home after his marriage to that crazy Jamaican girl from Gainesville had gone south -- literally. The girl had pulled up stakes and had gone back to Jamaica. This, coupled with the fact that every single one of Brian's harebrained business schemes had all crashed and burned -- most of them financed with their parents' money (like his latest brilliant idea of opening a music store in Athens, when there was already one on every corner) -- all made Philip cringe at the thought of having to watch over his brother for any length of time. But what was done was done.

"Hey Philly," Bobby says from across the room, polishing off the last of the cookies, "you think those refugee centers in the city are still up and running?"

"Who the hell knows?" Philip looks at his daughter. "How you doing, Punkin?"

The little girl shrugs. "Okay." Her voice is barely audible, like a broken wind-chime in the breeze. She stares at the stuffed penguin. "I guess."

"What do you think of this house? You like it?"

Penny shrugs again. "I don't know."

"What would you say if we stayed here awhile?"

This gets everyone's attention. Brian looks up at his brother. All eyes are on Philip now. Nick finally speaks up: "Whattya mean 'awhile'?"

"Gimme that hooch," Philip says, motioning at Bobby for the bottle. The bottle comes over and Philip takes a long pull, letting it burn nicely. "Look at this place," he says after wiping his mouth.

Brian is confused. "You said just for the night, right?"

Philip takes a deep breath. "Yeah, but I'm sorta getting over that idea right now."

Bobby starts to say, "Yeah, but --"

"Look. I'm just saying. Might be best for us to lay low for a spell."

"Yeah, but, Philly, what about --?"

"We could just stay put, Bobby, see what happens."

Nick has been listening intently to this. "Philip, come on, man, they've been saying on the news that the big cities are the safest --"

"The news? Jesus Christ, Nick, blow the wax outta your head. The news is going down the tubes with the rest of the population. Look at this place. You think some government half-way house is gonna have these kind of goodies, beds for everyone, enough food for weeks, twenty-year-old Scotch? Showers, hot water, washing machines?"

"We're so close, though," Bobby says after a moment's thought.

Philip sighs. "Yeah, well... close is a relative term."

"It's twenty miles, tops."

"Might as well be twenty thousand miles, all them wrecks on the interstate, 278 crawling with those things."

"That ain't gonna stop us," Bobby says. His eyes light up. He snaps his fingers. "We'll build a -- whattya call it? -- on the front end of the Chevy -- a scoop -- like in fucking Road Warrior --"

"Watch your language, Bobby," Philip says, nodding at the little girl.

Nick speaks up. "Dude, we stay here, and it's only a matter of time until those things out at the --" He stops himself, glancing at the child. Everybody knows what he's talking about.

Penny studies her soggy cereal as though she's not listening.

"These places are solid, Nicky," Philip counters, setting down the bottle, crossing his muscular arms across his chest. Philip has been giving a lot of thought to the problem of those wandering hoards out on the golf course. The key would be keeping quiet, masking out the light at night, not sending up any signals, or smells, or undo commotion. "As long as we got power, and we keep our wits about us, we're golden."

"With one gun?" Nick says. "I mean, we can't even use it without drawing their attention."

The Walking Dead
The Rise of the Governor
Coming this fall

“We’ll check out the other houses, look for weapons. These rich bastards are big on deer huntin’, maybe we can even find a silencer for the Ruger... hell, we can make one. You see that workshop downstairs?”

“C’mon, Philip. What are we, gunsmiths now? I mean... all we got to defend ourselves right now is a few —

“Philip’s right.”

Brian’s voice startles everybody — the way it comes out on a hoarse, wheezing tone of certainty. He pushes his cereal away and looks up at his brother. “You’re right.”

Philip is probably the one who is the most taken aback by the conviction in Brian’s nasally voice.

Brian stands up, comes around the table and stands in the doorway leading into the spacious, well-furnished living room. The lights are off in there, and all the shades are drawn. Brian points toward the front wall. “Basically, the front of the house is the problem. The sides and the back are pretty well protected by that tall fence. The dead don’t seem to be able to, like, penetrate barriers and stuff... and every house on this block has a fenced-in back yard.” For a moment, it looks as if Brian’s going to cough but he holds it in, puts his hand to his mouth for a moment. His hand is shaking. He goes on: “If we can, like, borrow materials from the other yards, other houses, maybe we can secure a wall across the front of the house, maybe across the neighbors’ houses, too.”

Bobby and Nick are looking at each other now, nobody reacting, until Philip finally says with a faint smile, “Leave it to the college boy.”

It’s been a while since the Blake boys have smiled at each other, but now Philip sees that at least his ne’er-do-well brother wants to be useful, wants to do something for the cause, wants to man-up. And Brian seems to be absorbing confidence from Philip’s approval.

Nick is unconvinced. “For how long, though? I feel like a sitting duck in this place.”

“We don’t know what’s gonna happen,” Brian says, his voice raw and yet somehow manic. “We don’t know what caused this thing, how long it’s gonna last... they could, like, figure this thing out, come up with an antidote or something... they could drop chemicals from crop dusters, the CDC could contain it... you never know. I think Philip’s totally right. We should cool our jets here for a while.”

“Damn straight,” Philip Blake says with a grin, still sitting with his ropy arms crossed. He gives his brother a wink.

Brian returns the wink with a satisfied little nod, wiping a strand of hair as thick as straw from his eyes. He takes a shallow breath into wheezing lungs and then triumphantly walks over to the bottle of Scotch, which sits on the table next to Philip. Grabbing the bottle with a gusto that he hasn’t shown in years, Brian lifts it to his lips and takes a massive gulp with the victorious swagger of a Viking celebrating a successful hunt.

Instantly, he flinches, doubles over, and lets out a fusillade of coughs. Half the liquor in his mouth goes spraying across the kitchen, and he coughs and coughs and coughs and wheezes furiously, and for a moment, the others just stare. Little Penny is thunderstruck, gawking with her huge eyes, wiping droplets of liquor from her cheek.

Philip looks at his pathetic excuse for a brother and then looks at his buddies. Across the room, Bobby Marsh struggles to stifle a laugh. Nick tries to repress his own twitching grin. Philip tries to say something but can’t help but start laughing, and the laughter is contagious. The others start chortling.

Soon, everybody is laughing hysterically — even Brian — and for the first time since this whole nightmare kicked in, the laughter is genuine: a release of something dark and brittle lurking in all of them.

That night, they try to sleep in shifts. Each one of them gets their own room on the second floor — the remnants of former inhabitants like eerie artifacts in a museum: a bedside table with a half full glass of water, a John Grisham novel open to a page that will never be finished, a pair of pompoms hanging off a teenage girl’s four-poster bed.

For most of the night, Philip sits watch downstairs, out in the living room, with his gun on a coffee table next to him and Penny tucked under blankets on a sectional sofa beside his chair. The child tries unsuccessfully to fall asleep, and around 3:00 in the morning, as Philip finds his mind casting back to those tormented thoughts of Sarah’s accident, he notices out of the corner of his eye that Penny is tossing and turning restlessly.

Philip leans over to her and strokes her dark hair and whispers, “Can’t sleep?”

The little girl has the covers pulled up to her chin, and she looks up at him. She shakes her head. Her ashen face is almost angelic in the orange light of a space heater, which Philip has rigged next to the couch. Outside, in the distant wind, barely audible over the soft drone of the heater, the dissonant chorus of groaning is relentless, like an infernal series of waves lapping a shore.

“Daddy’s here, Punkin, don’t worry,” Philip says softly, touching her cheek. “I’ll always be here.”

She nods.

Philip gives her a tender smile. He leans down and plants a kiss on her left eyebrow. “Ain’t gonna let nothin’ happen to you.”

She nods again. She has the little penguin lodged snugly in the nape of her neck. She looks at the stuffed animal and frowns. She moves the penguin to her ear, and she acts as though she’s listening to the animal whisper a secret. She looks up at her father. “Daddy?”

“Yeah, Punkin?”

“Penguin wants to know somethin’.”

“What’s that?”

“Penguin wants to know if them people are sick.”

Philip takes a deep breath. “You tell Penguin... yeah, they’re sick alright. They’re more than sick. That’s why we’ve been... puttin’ them outta their misery.”

“Daddy?”

“Yeah?”

“Penguin wants to know if we’re gonna get sick, too.”

Philip strokes the girl’s cheek. “No, ma’am. You tell Penguin we’re gonna stay healthy as mules.”

This seems to satisfy the girl enough for her to look away and stare into the void some more.

* * *

By 4:00 o’clock that morning, another sleepless soul in another part of the house is asking imponderable questions of his own. Lying in a tangle of blankets, his skinny form clad only in t-shirt and briefs, his fever breaking in a film of sweat, Brian Blake stares at the stucco plaster of a dead teenage girl’s ceiling and wonders if this is how the world ends. Was it Rudyard Kipling who said it ends ‘not with a bang but a whimper.’ No, wait a minute... it was Eliot. T.S. Eliot. Brian remembers studying the poem — was it ‘The Hollow Men’? — in his Twentieth Century Comparative Literature class at the U of G. A lot of good that degree had done him.

He lies there and broods about his failures — as he does every night — but tonight the ruminations are inter-cut with carnage, like frames of a snuff film inserted into his stream of consciousness.

The old demons stir, mingling with the fresh fears, wearing a groove into his

thoughts: Was there something he could have done or said to keep his ex-wife, Jocelyn, from drifting away, from lawyering up like she did, from saying all those hurtful things before she went back to Montego Bay? And can you kill the monsters with a simple blow to the skull or do you have to destroy the brain tissue? Was there something Brian could have done or begged for or borrowed to keep his music shop open in Athens — the only one of its kind in the South, his brilliant fucking idea of a store that catered to hip hop artists with refurbished turn tables and used bass cabinets and gaudy microphones festooned with Snoop-Dog bling? How fast are the unlucky victims out there multiplying? Is it like an airborne plague, or is it passed in the water like Ebola?

The circular ruminations of his mind keep going back to more immediate matters: the nagging feeling that the seventh member of the family that once lived here is still somewhere in the house.

Now that Brian has closed the deal among his compatriots that they should indeed stay here indefinitely, he can’t stop worrying about it. He hears every creak, every faint ticking of the foundation settling, every hushed whirr of the furnace coming on. For some reason that he cannot explain, he is absolutely certain that the blonde-haired kid is still here, in the house, waiting, biding his time for... what? Maybe the kid is the only one in the family who didn’t turn. Maybe he’s terrified and hiding.

Before turning-in that night, Brian had insisted they check the nooks and crannies of the house one last time. Philip had accompanied him with a pickaxe and a flashlight, and they had checked every corner of the basement, every cabinet, every closet and storage locker. They looked inside the meat freezer in the cellar, and even checked the washer and dryer for unlikely stowaways. Nick and Bobby looked up in the attic, behind trunks, in boxes, in wardrobes. Philip looked under all the beds and behind all the dressers. Coming up empty, they still made some interesting discoveries along the way.

They found a dog’s food bowl in the basement, but no sign of the animal. They also found an array of very useful power tools in the workshop: jigsaws, drills, routers, and even a nail gun. The nail gun would be especially handy for building barricades since it is somewhat quieter than a pounding hammer.

In fact, Brian is thinking about other uses for that nail gun when, all at once, he hears a noise that instantly frosts his scantily clothed body in goose bumps.

The sound is coming from above him, on the other side of the ceiling. It’s coming from the attic.

CHAPTER THREE

Upon hearing the noise — almost subconsciously identifying it as something other than the house settling, or the wind in the dormers, or the furnace rattling — Brian sits up on the edge of the bed.

He cocks his head and listens more carefully. It sounds like somebody scratching at something, or the faint sound of fabric tearing in fits and jerks. At first, Brian is compelled to go get his brother. Philip would be the best one to deal with this. It could be the kid, for God’s sake... or something worse.

But then, almost as an afterthought, Brian stops himself. Is he going to puss out again... as usual? Is he going to run, like always, to his brother — his younger brother, for God’s sake -- the same individual whose hand Brian had once held at the crosswalk every morning when the two of them were grade school kids at Burke County Elementary? No, goddamnit. Not this time. This time, Brian was going to grow a pair.

He takes a deep breath, turns, and searches for the flashlight he had left on the bedside table. He finds it and switches it on.

The narrow beam shoots across the dark bedroom, spreading a silver pool of light on the opposite wall. Just you and me, Justin, Brian thinks as he rises to his feet. His head is clear. His senses are crackling.

The truth is, Brian had felt incredibly good earlier that night when he had concurred with his brother’s plans, when he had seen the look in Philip’s eyes, like maybe Brian was not a hopeless loser after all. Now it was time to show Philip that the moment in the kitchen was not a fluke. Brian could get the job done just as well as Philip.

He moves quietly toward the door.

Before leaving the room, he grabs the metal baseball bat that he found in one of the boys’ bedrooms.

The papery rustling noises can be heard more clearly in the hallway, as Brian pauses under the attic hatchway, which is a glorified trap door embedded in the ceiling above the second-floor landing. The other bedrooms along the hallway — filled with the deep snores of Bobby Marsh and Nick Parsons — are situated on the other side of the landing, on the east side of the house, out of earshot. That’s why Brian is the only one hearing this right now.

A leather strap hangs down, low enough for Brian to jump up and grasp. He pulls the spring-levered hatch open, and the accordion-like stairs unfold with a pinging noise. Brian shines the flashlight up into the dark passage. Dust motes drift in the beam. The darkness is impenetrable, opaque. Brian’s heart chugs.

You fucking pussy, he thinks to himself. Get your pussy-ass up there.

He climbs the steps with the baseball bat under one arm, the flashlight in his free hand, and he pauses when he reaches the top of the ladder. He shines the light on a huge steamer trunk with Magnolia Springs State Park stickers on it.

Now Brian smells the cold putrid odors of must and mothballs. The autumn chill has already seeped into the attic through the seams of the roof. The air is cool on his face. And after a moment, he hears the rustling again.

It’s coming from a deeper place in the shadows of the attic. Brian’s throat is as dry as bone meal as he climbs to his feet on the threshold. The ceiling is low enough to force him to hunch. Shivering in his underwear, Brian wants to cough but doesn’t dare.

The scratching noises stop, and then start again, vigorous and angry-sounding. Brian raises the bat. He gets very still. He’s learning the mechanics of fear all over again: When you’re really, really scared, you don’t shake like in the movies. You get still, like an animal bristling.

It’s only afterwards you start shaking.

The beam of the flashlight slowly scans across the dark niches of the attic, the detritus of the well-to-do: an exercise bike laced with cobwebs, a rowing machine, more trunks, barbells, tricycles, wardrobe boxes, water-skis, a pinball machine furry with dust. The scratching noises cease again.

The light reveals a coffin.

Brian practically turns to stone.

A coffin?

* * *

Philip is already halfway up the staircase when he notices, up on the second floor landing, the attic stepladder hanging down, unfolded.

He pads up to the landing in his stocking feet. He carries an axe in one hand and a flashlight in the other. The .22 pistol is shoved down the back of his jeans. He is shirtless, his ropy musculature shimmering in moonbeams filtering down through a sky

light.

It takes him mere seconds to cross the landing and scale the accordion steps, and when he emerges into the darkness of the attic, he sees the silhouette of a figure across the narrow space.

Before Philip even has a chance to shine his flashlight on his brother, the situation becomes clear.

“It’s a tanning bed,” the voice says, making Brian jump. For the past few seconds, Brian Blake has been paralyzed with terror, standing ten feet away from the dusty, oblong enclosure shoved up against one wall of the attic. The top of the thing is latched shut like a giant clamshell, and something scratches to get out of it.

Brian jerks around and finds in the beam of his flashlight his brother’s gaunt, sullen face. Philip stands on the threshold of the attic with the axe in his right hand. “Move away from it, Brian.”

“You think it’s --?”

“The missing kid?” Philip whispers, cautiously moving toward the object. “Let’s find out.”

The scratching noise, as if stimulated by the sound of voices, surges and rises. Brian turns toward the tanning bed, braces himself, and raises the baseball bat. “He might have been hiding up here when he turned.”

Philip approaches with the axe. “Get outta the way, Sport.”

“I’ll take care of it,” Brian says bitterly, moving toward the latch, his baseball bat poised.

Philip gently steps in between his brother and the tanning bed. “You don’t have to prove nothing to me, man. Just move outta the way.”

“No, goddamnit, I got this,” Brian hisses, reaching for the dusty latch.

Philip studies his brother. “Okay, whatever. Go for it, but do it quick. Whatever it is -- don’t think about it too much.”

“I know,” Brian says, grasping the latch with his free hand.

Philip stands inches behind his brother.

Brian unlatches the enclosure.

The scuttling noises cease.

Philip raises the axe as Brian throws open the lid.

Two quick movements -- a pair of blurs in the darkness -- shoot across Philip’s sightline: a rustling of fur and the arc of Brian’s bat.

It takes a second or two for the animal to register in Philip’s heightened senses -- the mouse darting out of the glare of the flashlight and scurrying across the fiberglass trough toward a hole gnawed in one corner.

The baseball bat comes down hard, missing the fat, oily-grey rodent by a mile.

Pieces of the bed’s switch panel and old toys shatter at the impact. Brian lets out a gasp and recoils at the sight of the mouse vanishing down the hole, slithering back into the inner-workings of the bed’s base.

Philip lets out a sigh of relief and lowers the axe. He starts to say something when he hears a little metallic tune playing in the shadows next to him. Brian looks down, breathing hard.

A little jack-in-the-box, thrown by the impact of the bat, lies on the floor. Triggered by the fall, the tinny music plays a few more notes of a circus lullaby. Then the toy clown pops out -- sideways -- from the fallen metal container. “Boo,” Philip says wearily, with very little humor in his voice.

Their moods improve slightly the next morning after a huge breakfast of scrambled eggs and slab bacon and grits and ham and griddlecakes and fresh peaches and sweet tea. The fragrant mélange fills with entire house with the welcoming odors of coffee and cinnamon and smoked meats sizzling. Nick even makes his special red-eye gravy for the group, which sends Bobby into ecstasy.

Brian finds cold remedies in the master bedroom medicine cabinet and starts feeling a little better after he downs a few Day-Quil capsules.

After breakfast, they explore the immediate vicinity -- the single square block known as Green Briar Lane -- and they get more good news. They find a treasure trove of supplies and building materials: woodpiles for fireplaces, extra planking under decks, more food in the neighbor’s refrigerators, cans of gas in the garages, winter coats and boots, boxes of nails, liquor, blow torches, bottled water, a short-wave radio, a lap top, a generator, stacks of DVDs, and a gun rack in one of the basements with several hunting rifles and boxes of shells.

No silencer; but beggars can’t be choosers.

They also get lucky in the undead department. The houses on either side of the Colonial are empty, their residents evidently getting the hell out of Dodge before the shit had gone too far down. Two houses away from the Colonial, on the west side, Philip and Nick encounter an elderly couple who have turned, but the oldsters are easily, quickly, and most importantly, quietly dispatched with some well placed hatchet blows.

That afternoon, Philip and company cautiously begin work on the barricade across the front parkway of the Colonial and its two neighbors -- a total span of a hundred and fifty feet for the three lots, and sixty down either side -- which sounds to Nick and Bobby like a daunting amount of territory to cover, but with the ten-foot-long pre-fab sections they find under a neighbor’s deck, combined with fencing cannibalized off the place across the street, the work goes surprisingly fast.

By dusk that evening, Philip and Nick are connecting the last sections on the northern edge of the property line.

“I’ve been keeping an eye on ‘em all day,” Philip is saying, pressing the forked tip of the nail gun against the bracing of a corner section. He’s referring to the swarms out near the golf club. Nick nods as he butts the two support beams against each other.

Philip pulls the trigger, and the nail gun makes a muffled snapping noise -- like the crack of a metal whip -- sending a six-inch galvanized nail into the boards. The nail gun is baffled with a small piece of packing blanket, secured with duct tape, to dampen the noise.

“I ain’t seen a single one of them wander closer,” Philip says, wiping the sweat from his brow, moving to the next section of support beams. Nick holds the boards steady, and the tip presses down.

FFFFFUMP!

“I don’t know,” Nick says skeptically, moving to the next section, the sweat making his satin roadie jacket cling to his back. “I still say it’s not if... but when.”

FFFFFFFUMP!

“You worry too much, Son,” Philip says, moving to the next section of planking, tugging on the gun’s cord. The extension cable snakes off toward an outlet on the corner of the neighbor’s house. Philip had to connect a grand total of six twenty-foot cords to get the thing to reach. He pauses and glances over his shoulder.

About fifty yards away, in the backyard of the Colonial, Brian pushes Penny in a swing. It’s taken a little getting-used-to for Philip, putting his hapless brother in charge of his precious little girl, but right now Brian is the best nanny he’s got.

The play set -- of course -- is deluxe. Rich folks love to spoil their kids with shit like this. This one -- more than likely a haunt of the missing kid -- has got all the bells and whistles: Slide, clubhouse, four swings, climbing wall, jungle gym, and sand box.

“We got it made here,” Philip goes on, turning back to his work. “Long as we keep our heads screwed on straight, we’re gonna be fine.”

As they position the next section, the rustling sounds of their movements and the creak of the planks mask the telltale noise of shuffling footsteps.

The footsteps are coming from across the street. Philip doesn’t hear them until the errant zombie is close enough for its odor to register.

Nick is the first one to smell it: that black, oily, mildewy combination of rotting protein and decay -- like human waste cooking in bacon grease. It immediately puts Nick’s guard up. “Wait a minute,” he says, holding a section of planking. “You smell --?”

“Yeah, smells like --”

A fish-belly arm bursts through a gap in the fencing, grabbing a hank of Philip’s denim shirt.

The assailant was once a middle-aged woman in a designer running suit, now an emaciated wraith with torn sleeves, blackened, exposed teeth and the button eyes of a prehistoric fish, her hooked hand clutching Philip’s shirttail with the vise grip of frozen dead fingers. She lets out a low groan like broken pipe organ as Philip spins toward his axe, which lies canted against a wheelbarrow twenty feet away.

Too damn far.

The dead lady goes for Philip’s neck with the autonomic hunger of a giant snapping turtle, and across the yard, Nick fumbles for a weapon, but it’s all happening too fast. Philip rears backward with a grunt, just now realizing that he still holds the nail gun. He dodges the snapping teeth, and then instinctively raises the muzzle of the nail gun.

In one quick movement, he touches the tip to the thing’s brow.

FFFFFFFFFFFFUMP!

The lady zombie stiffens.

Icy fingers release their grip on Philip.

He pulls himself free, huffing and puffing, gaping at the thing.

The vertical cadaver teeters for a moment, wobbling as if drunk, shuddering in its soiled velveteen Pierre Cardin warm-up, but it will not go down. The head of the six inch galvanized nail is visible above the ridge of the lady’s nose like a tiny coin stuck there.

The thing remains upright for endless moments, its shark-like eyes turned upward, until it begins to slowly stagger backward across the parkway, its ruined face taking on a strange, almost dreamy expression.

For a moment, it looks as though the thing is remembering something, or hearing some high-pitched whistle. Then it collapses in the grass.

“I think the nail does just enough damage to take ‘em out,” Philip is saying after dinner, pacing back and forth across the shuttered windows of the lavish dining room, the nail gun in his hand like a visual aid.

The others are sitting at the long burnished oak table, the remnants of dinner lying strewn in front of them. Brian cooked for the group that night, defrosting a roast in the microwave and making gravy with a vintage Cabernet and a splash of cream. Penny is in the adjacent family room watching a DVD of Dora the Explorer.

“Yeah, but did you see the way that thing went down?” Nick points out, pushing an uneaten gob of meat across his plate. “After after you zapped it... looked like the damn thing was stoned for a second.”

Philip keeps pacing, clicking the trigger of the nail gun and thinking. “Yeah but it did go down.”

“It’s quieter than a gun, I’ll give you that.”

“And it’s a hell of a lot easier than splitting their skulls open with an axe.”

Bobby has just started in on his second helping of pot roast and gravy. “Too bad you don’t have a six mile extension cord,” he says with his mouth full.

Philip clicks the trigger a few more times. “Maybe we could hook this puppy up to a battery.”

Nick looks up. “Like a car battery?”

“No, like something you could carry more easily, something like one of them big lantern batteries or something outta one of them electric mowers.”

Nick shrugs.

Bobby eats.

Philip paces and thinks.

Brian stares at the wall, mumbling, “Something to do with their brains.”

“Say what?” Philip looks at his brother. “What was that, Bri?”

Brian looks at him. “Those things... the sickness. It’s basically in the brain, right? It’s gotta be.” He pauses. He looks at his plate. “I still say we don’t even know they’re dead.”

Nick looks at Brian. “You mean after we take ‘em out? After we... destroy ‘em?”

“No, I mean before,” Brian says. “I mean, like, the condition they’re in.”

Philip stops pacing. “Shit, man... on Monday, I saw one of ‘em get squashed by an eighteen wheeler and ten minutes later, it’s dragging itself along the street with its guts hanging out. They’ve been saying it on all the news reports. They’re dead, Sport. They’re way dead.”

“I’m just saying, the central nervous system, man, it’s complicated. All the shit in the environment right now, new strains of shit.”

“Hey, you want to take one of them things to a doctor for a checkup, be my guest.”

Brian sighs. “All I’m saying is, we don’t know enough yet. We don’t know shit.”

“We know all we need to know,” Philip says, giving his brother a look. “We know there’s more of them fucking things every day, and all they seem to want to do is have us for lunch. Which is why we’re gonna hang here for a while, let things play out a little.”

Brian breathes out a painful, weary sigh. The others are silent.

In the lull, they can hear the faint noises that they’ve been hearing all night, coming from the darkness outside: The muffled, intermittent thudding of insensate figures bumping up against the makeshift barricade.

Despite Philip’s efforts to erect the rampart quickly and quietly, the commotion of the day’s construction project has drawn more of the walking corpses.

“How long do you think we’re gonna be able to stay here?” Brian asks softly.

Philip sits down, lays the nail gun on the table and takes another sip of his bourbon. He nods toward the family room, where the whimsical voices of children’s programming drift incongruously. “She needs a break,” Philip says. “She’s exhausted.”

“She loves that play-set out back,” Brian says with a weak smile.

Philip nods. “She can live a normal life here for a while.”

Everybody looks at him. Everybody silently chews on the concept.

“Here’s to all the rich motherfuckers of the world,” Philip says, raising his glass.

The others toast without really knowing just exactly what they’re toasting... or how long it will last.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Heads up!

Things are about to get crazy here at Walking Dead central, with good old season two just a month away (wow!). The Walking Dead Chronicles is coming out, as is the Rise of the Governor novel (more on that later).

Yep. Busy month--busy, busy, busy. Let's dive right in to the letters. (It's Robert in italics, by the way).

I've already accepted the fact that Carl was shot, and really never had a problem with it (no one is safe, right?). The only thing that irks me is that Rick goes on with this huge monologue speech about how it is possible to live in a community, to work together, and how it manageable it is to deal with the dead. So, I have to ask, what was the prison? Was the prison not exactly that? They set up a system of killing roamers through the fences, they had a garden set up, and they had a methodical system of clearing out the dead. Since he has done this all before, what is the deal with this re-awakening of Rick? Hopefully I make it in a future issue so I can get some reasoning/explanation.

-Alex Ruggiero

Well, the prison was kind of a first attempt, and so early in the apocalypse, a guy is allowed to feel excited about something that looks perfect.

It's important to note that the prison... was a prison. So the idea of setting up civilization there--and living there long term, is not appealing. It was an act of desperation, nothing was perfect--it was a makeshift experience.

The community in Alexandria is vastly different... they're living in houses, there's a larger group of people there. I can understand how Rick would be more optimistic.

rabble rabble Carl rabble rabble how dare you rabble rabble never going to read rabble rabble. Ok now that I got that out of the system. This message is regarding Carl but in a different light. It seems that Rick and Carl both reflect each other. Rick loses an arm Carl loses an eye. Any chance that he is going to wake up alone in a hospital? I have to say Carl is my favorite character in the series. And while I was a little disappointed by all the hate mail you received I was happy to see so much support for Carl. Which brings me to my next comment/question, In television series I was thrilled to see the characters faithfully represented, however, the kid playing Carl really didn't step up to the plate. I understand that there really wasn't a large role for the character, but I was disappointed to not see Carl calling the zombies "Stupid Jerks" is Carl going to have a larger role in season 2? Can you get a new actor for Carl if this kid doesn't step up? You can totally Iron man 2 it and get a new actor, I can turn a blind eye. Finally, I know you just killed Jesse, but who is Rick's new Squeeze? I know it would be a total train wreck but I kinda want to see Michonne and Rick together.

Keep up the good writing Robert and don't let the fan boys change your decisions on anything.

Steve

rabble rabble Carl response rabble rabble

I think the current story line is addressing how Carl is going to be the next few issues. It's a little too soon for Robert to begin "full circling" his own story.

As for couples: Michonne's gonna totes go lez for Andrea. Paparazzi will call them Michonndrea.

Chandler Riggs, the actor who plays Carl... is phenomenal. Seriously. Mark my words, we'll be hearing about him for years to come. I truly feel like we are lucky to have him on the show and the work he is doing is amazing.

He did not do much in season one, true... but we're building to him becoming a more well-rounded character and not just a child... like we did in the comic. I'm positive that after

you've seen season 2 in its entirety, you'll love Chandler as much as I do. Just wait... there's some cool stuff coming.

You guys are too much!!!

Btw - scalped is def worth reading. It's awesome.

- Brian Bockrath

Sometimes I feel like we're not enough for you, Brian.

[Robert, delete this letter if you think we should stop]

Stop? Why would we ever stop? Brian Bockrath is the best person on the planet. I'm not going to stop until he gets a raise. You reading this, Charlie? (Too much, Ben?)

Hi Robert and Sina!

I just wanted to chime in on the whole Carl "debacle". Some people are saying this is poor story telling fueled by shock value, but these people are simply wrong. The Walking Dead is the finest piece of zombie fiction available and one of the biggest reasons for that is nobody is safe. None of the characters have plot armor, not even the main character. I'm sick and tired of seeing movies, comics, video games, novels, etc. putting their characters through completely impossible to survive scenarios and having them survive without a scratch. This mentality has clearly bled through into the general reading public whenever I read a theoretical forum thread about the zombie apocalypse. There's too many delusional people out there that seem think their replica katana will make them into unstoppable zombie slayers. It's a good thing that Mr. Kirkman isn't quite so deluded!

That is such intense and such accurate imagery. #brutal

So kudos to you, Robert, for doing what most other authors are too scared to do (kill/maim their own creations). Keep up the good work and don't give in to your readers who don't have the guts to watch what would happen to survivors in the zombie apocalypse, let alone survive one themselves!

There's nothing brave about what Robert does, he just knows he can write another awesome character immediately after killing a grip off at a time (take a look at some of his other series to see how well that pans out for him... not spoiling nothing).

Man, I don't even know what you're talking about, Sina! What's coming up in my other books? Crap, as I type this, Comic-Con just ended and I'm spent. I hope I don't screw up this letters column.

Hi Robert,

After reading that filming has begun for Season 2. I was wondering if we'll be seeing a cameo appearance from the Robert Kirkman in Season 2 much like the Steven King, John Carpenter and Stan Lee's of the writing/film world.

Looking forward to the next issue as well as the alternate reality that is AMC's The Walking Dead.

Much love from up north.

Mr Jonathan Lepage Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Robert, to great credit, isn't the biggest fan of having his mug put in stories, be it comics or TV. Maybe a bit too self-reflexive?

My main gripe with it is that it always takes me out of the thing I'm watching. Peter Jackson is on the boat? Stephen King is the guy at the ATM? Stan Lee is Larry King (well, that one was AWESOME and hilarious). As much as I like something like Bill Murray playing himself in Zombieland, I just really hate seeing M. Night Shyamalan playing

*characters in his movies. It seems self-serving. If you're a good actor, like Spike Lee in Do the Right Thing, or Ed Burns in most anything (I like Ed Burns) that makes sense... but just popping yourself in something for no real reason other than you like to be seen on screen *cough* McFarlaneintheSpawnmovie *cough* is something that's always annoyed me.*

So you'll never see me on screen, you know what I look like, it's nothing special.

Yikes. Sure seemed like we had to wait a long time for an issue full of nothing. Love your book, but there was no character development, no revelations, no forward progress. Nothing that couldn't be told on a couple of pages... yet somehow drawn out over an entire issue. As good as this comic began, it's now turned into a daily soap opera... except, on a soap, you get this kind of action every day, not once a month! I guess you think if you shoot Carl in the head, that justifies a few issues like this... Seriously though, it's time for a major story arc. Something big... not another, "ooooh, somebody might die!" moment. We know that no one is safe, you've proven that over and over. What, is digging a moat around the community supposed to make me excited for the next few issues?

Love your work guys, but you need to step it up. I have plenty of ideas if you need help :)

-Dennis

Yeah, Andrew J. Shaw said the same thing.

I think there is plenty of character development that happened in issue 86. And there are things that may have seemed unimportant that will be revealed to be much more important as time goes on. So stay tuned.

Also, and I've said this many times. You can't just keep everything going at full speed all the time, there needs to be downtime to make the exciting parts seem exciting. If I'm screaming nonstop, it ceases to be loud at some point... and then how do I scream? So, this is another down period, a quiet period where the characters are getting a bit of a breather (but there ARE important things still going on!). I get mail like this every time it happens! I should be used to it by now!

Also, sheesh, Dennis, a major story arc ended TWO ISSUES before you wrote this letter...

Robert,

Issue 86 of the walking dead was the best thing you've ever written.. Maybe it's from working in the WD writers room. The segue from the tour of the wall to the firing range was impressive. When rick says "and that's why she's the boss..."it was the perfect end to the scene.. this whole issue was so well crafted. The walking dead IS your Sergeant Pepper, Mr. K.

Steve Lennon
Maspeth NY

Wow, how opposite from the letter above!

Robert can answer about whether or not the writers room directly affects his writing the series (I don't think it does, as his process doing The Walking Dead hasn't changed a bit: getting a full body massage while dictating the script to his second assistant), but the writers room vibe is definitely his inspiration for his new series: THIEF OF THIEVES.

I can't help but learn from the writer's room experience. I sit in a room and talk about story for a large portion of my day now. And I do it with some of the most talented writers I've ever met. Seriously, these guys are the greatest... and I do feel like I'm learning a lot.

Thanks.

Sirs-

I've been reading the Walking Dead since issue #1 (which I sold last fall for a hefty profit- thanks Kirkman!) and have turned many friends on to it over the years. This far in to the series and it's still an excellent read. But now to the Carl situation: the letters page has been filled with people (my friends included) shocked and outraged over Carl getting shot. However, I'm kind of upset that you took the safe route and didn't kill him. Maybe it's because I don't have children, or maybe I'm just a mean bastard, but it just seemed so "Hollywood" to not actually kill him. Any time there's a child in a horror film you automatically know he/she will survive and that takes all the suspense and "horror" out of it.

Anyway, the book is still awesome and I just wanted to voice my opinion because I seem to be in the minority. Many thanks.

Dave M.
Middletown, NY

Carl KILLED another kid... how much more anti-Hollywood can you get? Why do I bother arguing...

Wocka wocka! Just to address the "backlash" to the Carl situation... we print ALL negative letters that come in.

They're just more interesting to respond to. Also, if you dwell on the positive, I feel like you just get lazy. So while we did print a lot of negative mail... that was only about a third of the mail we got--and the rest of it was all positive.

People LOVE that Carl got his face shot off!

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I just realized something, correct me if I'm wrong, but if someone is killed, by any means besides a bite by a zombie they come back as one correct? or am i just mistaken? If it is true, then that would mean that Shane could still be dead-alive (for lack of a better word) and making his way to those people's door step. Again, correct me if I'm wrong.

Thanks for you're time

Warwick Thompson

Issue 15, sucker. #fanfail

Shame on you Warwick. I can only hope that you've only read volume one and current issues and haven't caught all the way up.

Hello, Robert and Sina.

First time writing in, so I'll say right away that I'm a huge fan of the comics and I've read every issue.

Now that that's out of the way, I'd like to say that you guys are catching way too much flack for shooting Carl in the face. One of the best things about this comic is the realism. When I read it, I believe that all of these things could happen. Realistically speaking, in a fire fight, when inexperienced shooters are handling the guns, the chances of a stray bullet catching someone is reasonably high. If Carl makes it out of that coma and you shoot him in the face again in the very same issue, I won't even be mad then. Just keep doing what' you're doing; it works.

Thanks! This officially settles the months-long argument about the entire Carl scenario! Woot!

Onto the TV show. I liked the first season, but was nerdily bothered by the differences between it and the comics. I can deal, though. I get that with more writers involved and a studio to deal with, changes happen. That said, I would love it if you guys could include the torture scene where Michonne gets revenge on The Governor. That's one of the most brutally creative torture scenes I've ever encountered, and I'd like to see it actually acted out, to whatever extent would be allowed on television.

You like torture porn, noted.

Also, could you give me a cameo part as a zombie in the comics? I have short brown hair (I guess colour is kind of irrelevant), wear V-necks and tightish pants. My ancestry is Italian-Scottish. Do your best! If I could be biting someone, that would be great.

All the best,
Andrew Barr

We publish these letters every now and again to remind fans that we really have no power over making you zombies on the show. There are casting calls in the Atlanta area, and AMC holds contests every now and again... but Skybound can't do anything from the Los Angeles offices to help you out. Sad face.

Pay attention, Sina. He said COMICS, he wants to be a zombie in the comics. Sorry, Andrew. We had Charlie draw you into this issue. Take a look!

Gah. Sorry, Andrew. I had just read a fan letter asking the TV version of your question, and opted to print yours instead. Forgive me: it's late where I live.

Fellas,

So I heard the guy who did Shawshank was doing this zombie show on AMC - three reasons to check it out. So I bought the blue DVD and after one episode, I decided I needed to check out the comic. I got the first five hard-bound volumes from the library on a hunch, and that hunch did not disappoint. After that, I went to my local comic store, which I had never really been in other than to buy Magic cards as a kid, but had not returned as their selection was, well, not incredible (Sorry Ravenswood, I love you now!).

Where am I going with this?

IDK but I bore easily.

Right, so back to now. Basically, what I'm trying to say is that now I have to wait for TWD to come in every MONTH, and that's kinda sucky, considering I read the first 80 issues in about a week. Can you just write them in 12-issue arcs every week? Also, can you do that with Invincible? Same situation, different comic. I'm a pretty impatient guy.

While I'm being demanding, can we please have more conflict? It's been like two issues and I need more action. This character

development thing is great, but the 'too-good-to-be-trueness' of the community here is just, well... Let's get the Governor back in here already and shoot Carl's other eye out! Maybe not. Whatever, I trust you.

Thanks for trusting. Some issues come together when read in consideration of a larger story arc. Comics have the luxury of not needing "bottle episodes" so even slower-paced issues in Robert's books lead to big stuff.

Last thing - It's my birthday on Tuesday and you have to print this for that reason. Or not. I'll keep reading either way, but it would be a cheap thrill for me, and let's face it, I'm not getting any younger...

Last thing for real - is it okay if I keep calling this a comic? I'll totally call it a 'graphic novel' if you want, it's just that saying "comic" makes me feel younger...

Bye!

-Travis
Clinton, NY

Yeah, call 'em comics. "Graphic Novels" is too snobby for this letters column.

I prefer ILLUSTRATED LITERATURE, please.

This is probably going to sound like an ultimate fan boy letter, but it is not meant to be.

I have loved zombies for a good many years, watching the mastery of George Romero throughout each of his films. Hell, I love zombies so much, I even wrote a book, had it published and made two indie zombie films with one in the market at this time.

Proud of you, mean it!

I remember a comic by the same name years ago that featured talking zombies and was generally short-lived. I was glad this new dead graphic novel was not it.

Every page was taken in and absorbed by me and gave me new passion and drive with my own work. Then once again, something else came about and that was the tv series, excellent in scope and design.

Yet this letter must address the comic. The comic that is a drama on paper. This unique storytelling does not pull punches with anyone and we know how everyone is definitely not safe. I am waiting for that moment when Rick dies. I'm sure it will happen even though he is the main character, even main characters have to pass at one time or another.

Just read some love letters to you from so-called fans. I know everyone is entitled to their opinion, but you know what they say about people and opinions and that everyone has one... Yes, I do not have a kid, but I know people who do. Maybe my opinion would change if I did, but for God's Sake people, even kids die or are horribly maimed. It happens everyday in the REAL world, so for them to make such a big stink over a fictionalized child creates real world thoughts of why are they so choked up over a comic. I just hope they care more for real world children that go through this than a drawing. This is what makes your work so great though in that people really care about your characters to react in such a way.

Guess I lied about the Carl debate being done...

With that I end this with a couple of questions I hope you can kind of go over. I know you probably can't reveal too much, but a little something would be nice, and if anything, maybe some suggestion from a fan would help you know what us fans would like to see down the road.

1) This is probably a given, but will they ever get out of the Washington, D.C. neighborhood? It is getting really drawn out and I am hoping that something is going to force them to high-tail it out of there soon. Maybe the town is overrun by either zombies or human scum and they have to blow it up or it blows up in some other form?

Yeah, google "Walking Dead A Larger World," and deal with it.

Manners, Sina! Anyway, stay tuned. I think in time we'll see that the thought of leaving the community would be as absurd as the thought of staying in the prison for longer than we did. I've got a plan; it's all going to work out. It's not drawn out--we're just getting started!

2) Why is it that every time Michonne gets with a man, it has to be a black man? Does she not like white men? I guess it is just the opportunities that present themselves, but being married to a black woman myself, I could really relate more to the story if this happened sometime. (And I know Abraham and Rosita where a couple before he cheated, but is she more Hispanic than black?)

Michonne's consistently been attracted to black men. Even her boyfriend who she fended off at the beginning of the apocalypse.

I really don't think there's anything wrong to have a black woman be attracted to black men. Have you SEEN black men? Anyway, it seemed like there were a lot of interracial relationships in comics, to the point of being cliché. And coming off Tyreese and Carol, I thought it would

be nice to have a little black romance in the book. Also, I think Michonne being not attracted to white men is an interesting character trait.

Also, saying "I'm in an interracial relationship, your characters should be in an interracial relationship" is like me asking for characters to be fat.

3) I know the reason Carl has acted they way he has is probably due to the overwhelming things that has been happening to him and his dad from day one, but I hope if he gets well again, he will become a better person. Yeah, I know he is still young, but man he has been a little prick for far too long by being so disrespectful to his dad!

Well, God took care of his rude behavior, now didn't he?

Wow, Sina. WOW.

4) Even though more people are killed by zombies or die from other ways and return as the dead, at what point will most of the dead just waste away to nothing? If they could just hole up for a year or so, you would think the entire world of the dead would be gone. This is the oxymoron of zombie lore though, in that there wouldn't be a story if it was really set in our reality. It generally is never discussed or there is some sort of explanation that tries to set it aside, out of sight, out of mind. Maybe their husks of a shell dry out and so then they never fully rot away to bones? Who knows, just what is your thought on it?

I can probably go on, but that is the jest of it, have at it, and good luck on this and future endeavors.

Darrin Patterson
Columbus, Ohio

Robert, what are your thoughts on question four?

Well, aside from the fact that new zombies are theoretically getting made all the time... it's really simple. Are the zombies rotting away? Are they continuing to decay? My answer is YES, they are... some are rotting more than others, and I believe that whatever mysterious element is making them get up and walk around--is also slowing their decay. See... makes sense right? So will there be a day when there are no zombies left? I don't know man... maybe... you'll just have to keep reading.

Dear Sina, Kirkman, Adlard, & Rathburn,

It seems like only yesterday I picked up the first TWD trade at the suggestion of Gus (owner of Central City Comics in Ellensburg, WA). By the time issue 61 came out I was following you monthly in floppies and after issue 75 I switched back to trades. Well today I read the No Way Out trade and immediately went to my new local comic shop (Bosco's in Anchorage, AK) to pick up issue 85. I just wanted to tell the four of you, that you win! I can't "wait for the trade" anymore and will be picking up the floppies again. I can't believe some of the fantastic rants I would have missed in the letters column. Thanks to all four of you for the fantastic work you do every month (no matter what Andrew J. Shaw says)!

I know, AJS thinks he's SO much better than this book!

Kirkman: If Carl does actually die, I will forgive you if and only if you bring Tech Jacket back as a full series! (I loved the back up stories in Invincible but they aren't enough to satisfy me!)

Are there any characters you regret killing off? (You should regret killing Tyrese)

Tommy Orr

P.S. If you keep Carl alive but he remains a vegetable I'll settle for a Tech Jacket miniseries.

I'm down for more Tech Jacket.

Me too. And Tommy, I regret killing almost every character. I wish I could write more of Tyreese, Donna, Allen, Carol, Alice, Axel, The Governor, Martinez, Morgan, Lori, Dale, Glenn, Dexter, Shane and all the rest... but you know what? Characters just need to die. It's what the book's about. And the stories that come from it are worth the loss... so I'd never dream of undoing it.

I tried to fit as many letters as possible while still allowing us room to present our first of two interviews with WALKING DEAD: THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR novelist JAY BONANSINGA! I was so lucky to chat with Jay and provide you guys some insight into my favorite book I've read this year (I haven't delved into Hunger Games yet, and Megan Pope tells me THAT is the shit).

Enjoy!

-Sina Grace

Yay! Jay is the best! Enjoy the interview, folks. And please, enjoy the novel as well. It was a blast to work with Jay on it!

-Robert Kirkman

an interview with

JAY BONANSINGA

author of

THE WALKING DEAD: RISE OF THE GOVERNOR

Hi Jay! Thanks for taking a minute to talk about the book with us. We've all been poring over the novel (The Walking Dead: Rise of the Governor) here at the Skybound offices, and everybody is jealous that I get to chat with you about the book.

First question, most obvious: how was the process of working with Robert Kirkman on a Walking Dead novel?

I could gush. But that would reveal what a geeky fan-boy I am. Let me put it this way: Robert was the architect, he was the Frank Lloyd Wright, and I was the guy with the butt crack showing who climbed up on the scaffold and figured out how we were going to make this beautiful cantilever work. I basically just put the lathe and plaster on Robert's amazing story. And one of the myriad things I love about Robert is his laconic, forthright, and direct approach to storytelling. He's got Clint Eastwood's gut when it comes to writing. "This works," he would say. Or "I'm not crazy about this," he would comment, and you just always know where you're going. It was essentially a well-oiled machine!

What aspects of The Walking Dead drew you to the franchise?

The question should be what aspects did NOT draw me to the franchise. Again, I could go on and on. For me, The Walking Dead will forever be an iconic work in this field because it strips away all the gaudy crap that mires many archetypal horror stories – obligatory shocks, splatter for splatter's sake, tedious irony, etc. – in favor of gut-wrenching and real emotions. That is what draws me to it more than anything else. I am so freaking moved by the fact that Robert has created a zombie Rosetta stone by posing these eternal questions: What would it really be like? How would we feel? How the hell would we cope? That is why, in my opinion, this series has touched such a nerve.



photo: Jim Newberry

Reading the novel, I felt like I was actually able to breathe in this telling of the apocalypse. Were you excited to examine the weeks in Rick Grimes's world when he was comatose?

I don't think I've ever encountered a comic book series that has such a rich off-panel universe. I'm not even sure why. But reading the comic, you really get a sense there is amazing stuff occurring just beyond the borders of the frame. Yes, if you follow the Rick Grimes time line, you are riveted, and it feels, in a narrative sense, like you're following the central river – the main conduit – but this is a body of water that is thousands of miles long and has countless tributaries. I guess that's why we had such a fruitful time taking a branch down an extremely dark, dangerous, twisted landscape while Rick lay in his stupor.

Were there any challenges you had to face writing in Robert's continuity?

I guess, maybe, we should have been more worried about it than we were, but other than a few little detail issues, we had a kind of Vulcan mind-meld going on with the continuity. I used the comic book in the same fashion that I often use location

photographs and maps in my original novels. Again, I attribute the ease with which we keep the continuity straight to Robert's big brain – he's got an entire universe in there, and he knows what's going on in every corner of every nook and cranny while all this simultaneous shit is going on. There were only a few moments where Robert would say, "Oh, you can't give that guy a scar right there on his cheek because when he does make his appearance in the comic his face is unmarked." But I love that kind of stuff. I'm a filmmaker as well as a novelist, and I just geek out on all that cool minutia and due diligence stuff that might drive a sane person, well... insane.

Good, evil, and the gray area are played with constantly in The Walking Dead comics. Can you elaborate on how that's dealt with in Rise of the Governor?

It's dealt with as an anthropologist would deal with it – namely, with a complete, utter lack of preconceived judgment. Now this is my own opinion, and I'd be curious as to what Robert would have to say about this. But in my view, there is no good and evil in The Walking Dead, just as there is no good and evil among soldiers on a hairy battlefield. Only survival. This is why The Walking Dead is so realistic. We do what we do because we are programmed by hundreds of thousands of years of programming to do one thing: survive. Yes, sometimes it's ugly as hell. Sometimes it looks like evil. Sometimes it looks like heroic, wonderful, selfless sacrifice. But what it really is what I think of as animal behavior.

You really get into the Georgia scene, especially with the character Brian's background. What kind of research did you do to get into the Georgia state of mind?

I love that area, even though I'm a damn Yankee – a Midwestern boy through and through -- and have only been down there a few times. It lingers in my mind, though, and has stamped itself indelibly on my midbrain. I love the south for strange, seemingly trivial reasons. I love the way southerners keep their air conditioning roaring cold, like frigging walk-in refrigerators – God, I love that!!! I love the light down there, and the sound that summer makes, and the color of the earth. I love high-lonesome music, and fried okra, and the fact that much of our culture comes from down there – whether we pretentious, arrogant, self-satisfied northerners will admit it or not. I will confess this, though: I could not have kept the geography straight without the daily use of Google Earth. I guess that's how I got in the Georgia state of mind: Memories, photo albums, food, music, and Google Earth.

There's a child character in the midst of all this havoc- Penny. How did you approach her reaction to the rise of the undead in comparison to kids like Carl, or Sophia in the Walking Dead universe?

I think Penny – again, from my perspective – is more introverted and withdrawn than either Carl or Sophia. Penny is like a classic child from a broken home. She's already wounded by the loss of her mother (pre-apocalypse), as well as by the volatile nature of her father. But the thing about Penny that really has me stoked is that she – perhaps – is the strongest character in the story. Without giving anything away, I think she turns out to be the emotional core in Rise of the Governor.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but this is your first time tackling the undead. Was incorporating your style of writing in this genre a tough transition?

I've done mummies (Frozen, 2005). I've done vampires ("The Need," 1995). I've done ghosts (Oblivion, 2000). I've done witches (The Miniaturist, 2010). I've done haunted houses ("Due Date," 2003). I've even done killer clowns ("Stash," 2003). But you're right, I've never done zombies. Was it a tough transition? Not at all. I think the thing about zombies that sunk a hook into me was that fact that they are unlike all the other archetypes in one way: They have no individuality. They are part of the environment – as brutal and impassive as acid rain – and that appeals to me. The best horror has a sense of place, a lush atmosphere, a texture so thick you can spread it with a knife. Kirkman's world is rife with all this good stuff. Zombies are a rotting patina – they convert horror into high definition. I think readers are going to come away from this book with their clothes reeking of zombie.

I'm sure you've had some time to think about this: what's your weapon of choice for the zombie apocalypse?

Again, I don't want to give anything away, but there's a makeshift weapon in book, which the Blake boys discover almost by accident, that is fast, silent, hilarious, creepy, cool and absolutely logical: This device is my personal favorite. I'll leave it at that. Additionally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention my second favorite weapon of choice: The lawnmower (see Peter Jackson's Dead Alive).

Check back next month for part two of this scintillating interview, where we dish more on zombie lore, writing methods, and more!

The Walking Dead: Rise of the Governor is in stores this October from St. Martin's Press! Pre-order your copy today!

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

It's almost that time!

In just a few short weeks, we'll be getting the outpour of delight and joy from season 2's premiere. Just this week, we're celebrating the release of **THE WALKING DEAD CHRONICLES**. Next week, we'll be in New York for Comic-Con, celebrating the widespread release of **THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR**. It'll be a busy month for you fans!

And a busy month for me... so... no time to chat, dive in, Sina!

Let's talk more Carl, more telephone shenanigans, and answer some bullet-point questions....

Salutations

Just finished reading issue 87. May I just say "Oh shit" as well as "Aw he'lll no". Anyways, I have been reading over some of the letters in the last few issues and I am amazed at the amount of hatred being spewed by these people. These people are supposedly fans of the series, but as soon as something happens that they dislike they claim to turn their backs on it all. I want to know if they were as outraged when other children in the series were outright MURDERED. Were they upset for poor Susie and Rachel? And what about Billy? Were these same people who are upset about Carl being injured writing such strongly opinionated letters for the deaths of the others? I highly doubt it. Yes, none of us know the other children in the series as well as we know Carl, but I don't see how they can all complain about your harming a child when so many others have already been killed. And if these people are so concerned for a FICTIONAL CHILD who is a DRAWING, maybe they should go out into their communities and actually help REAL CHILDREN whose lives are in danger. Are these people getting involved with helping to bring attention to things like children soldiers? Children who actually might get shot right through the motherfuckin eye?! Again, I highly doubt it. Well, shit just got a little too real in here, I'm gonna stop this rant now. May I just add that I do love Carl, and I am upset by his being injured, but for now it looks like it's all worked out anyways. And may I also add that even I will be a little pissed if Michonne is ever killed, but I will understand if she does. As long as she gets an epic death. I just wanna finish by expressing how deeply I love this series. It is completely engrossing and I love how I never really know what's going to happen next. Can't wait for the next issue!

You make The Walking Dead sound like The Hunger Games! Which, if you're gonna put it that way: people are Team Carl.

Sincerely, Hayley

P.S. I have friends who are convinced that the series will end with it being revealed Rick was in some fucked up coma dream the whole time. Please don't make

them be right. That would be the suckiest story of all time. OF ALL TIME.

Yeah, don't worry, I'm all over that. This isn't the finale to Newhart. Although... that would be funny if it all turned out to take place in a snow globe.

Seriously, that is not the ending, I would never do that. DE-BUNKED.

Hey roberto kirkywerky. I like potatos and the walking dead comic. "i ate your guts". Next time you roast a potato roast one for me. I am me from the future. You can stick this in letter hacks if you want. But i want to see more potatos in your comics.

From darren abbiss in australia and england.

This may be the most random letter I've seen. Robert?

I've seen randomer. Still, let this guy have his moment in the sun.

Hello,

I just finished reading issue 87 and I am officially bored with the series. I'm not torn up about Carl's awful injury, but rather the pace that the story is currently taking. I enjoyed the intensity of the characters being on the run looking for a way to survive, but also, looking for a reason why the zombie apocalypse happened. I'm not interested in a revolving cycle of violence. I'd like to know what Mr. Kirkman's ability is to create history and expand beyond the revolving short stories of violence. I mean, there's no way that the series is going to last another 100 issues unless you try to find out what started the apocalypse and what will keep it from happening again. Look, I appreciate the story up to now, and I have every issue to prove it, but it's time to just stop the survival game and go on the offensive. I'd like to find out why the zombies exist and what mankind is doing to get rid of them.

Thanks.

Waiting patiently for the truth behind the story.
Frank

Well, this book is going to be a true test of your patience, because Robert's said multiple times that he's not really interested in delving into the why, but more about the how—how we survive.

This current storyline is addressing your concern about what mankind is doing to get rid of them. As Rick gains a bit of control over his life and The Community, you'll see his tactics to survive work out in a much larger scope than living day-to-day.

I get what you're saying, Frank. I think by issue 100, you'll see more where things are going and be very happy. While Sina is right, I don't plan on ever revealing why things happened (and the characters were never looking for answers, as I recall) there are different stories to tell and this book will be taking a huge transition moving forward that I'm excited about that will address a bit of your concerns.

Hey guys! I've been hooked since 2 years when I've picked up a volume randomly. (best way to get a good comic BTW) I have a couple of things to say.

First: -They haven't fix the breach yet! It's been 3 issues they have the time to do it (as I type, issue 87 got out). They could get the materials by dismantling a house, or else.

Uhhm, fixed off-screen?

Yeah, I thought that was a given--they've fixed the fence... it's done. I thought it would be boring to show.

- Speaking of dismantling a house, couldn't it be a good way to get lotta materials for defense? I can't believe all the houses are full of people.

Think long term: more houses are better to either spread out during an attack, or to have in case of population growth. Plus: these characters are always having spats, it's good for there to be an empty house to just unwind and not deal.

What Sina said.

-They're missing food? Why not gardening! -everybody knows how to.

Winter's been the issue with food. The group may not have the resources to manage farming as the snow begins to pile.

What Sina said...

-Last, I think terminator glasses would fit Carl. Neat, uh?

cheers, Seb Bégin
Mtl, QC

I think Carl would look really good in gigantic gold aviators... projecting much?

Dear Robert and Sina,

The newest issue of The Walking Dead saga was spot-on. It was nice to see Abraham show some pity towards Rosita. She didn't deserve the response she received from his issue prior. And I was glad to see Abe had some heart left. But more than anything... CARL IS ALIVE! I think the amnesia angle could be an interesting one. And I still hope to see a kid grow up in this new world with few memories of the previous one. Carl has been one of my favorites since the early days and I love watching him develop into a new and exciting character. Rick, on the other hand, I am tiring of. I'm not sure why but I just don't care that much for the guy any longer. Perhaps, that is your intent. Whatever the case, another masterful issue. Congrats and keep up the ground breaking work.

sincerely, matt cashel

I think after page 22 of this issue, you'll fall for Rick again.

Rick is continuing the transformation that started at the very beginning of this series. Rick more than any other character is constantly in a state of flux and while it's completely understandable

to not find him too likable right now, all I can really say is stick with it.

He starts buying everyone puppies next issue!

Hey guys. I just want to start off with the fact that I never was into comics before. Not that I was against them, just never had an interest in them. Then..... I was introduced to you guys via a, well, someone very special and dear to my heart. He told me about this new show coming on AMC that I should check out. And how it was based off a comic he has been in love with. Well, that night I went and watched a preview of the show and knew right away there was no way I was gonna miss it. It ROCKED. The show is great, but when the season ended so soon, I was like WTF? Now what am I gonna do????? So I was talkin to my "friend" and he still could not say enough good things about the book. Once he started talkin about it he just couldn't stop, which I loved. I ended up getting the compendium for Christmas. Blew through it in like a week or two. Then I had to get the volumes. And now, I have been all caught up for about a few months. I had so much trouble catching up on the trades, they would be sold out the same day. I said to the nice comic book store guy "What can I do?????" He said, "we offer a subscription service, give us your name and we'll pull it for you when it comes out" {cue Angelic chorus} I have since had no more anxiety and am not too proud to announce, "yes, I have my own file in a drawer at a comic book store". Well, I just finished the preview for The Walking Dead: The Rise of the Governor, and let me tell you, I am lookin forward to that shit as well. This is such a great concept I can't even put into words how much I love this story. I mean, it gets into the characters and you feel like you are a part of it. (I still shudder at when Lori & the baby were killed) You start to think "Wow, how would I handle that" or "What would I do if this happened". I am sad to say that me and this guy are not able to talk anymore (hopefully if circumstances allow, that will change someday) but I am soooooo thankful for the time we got to have and especially for him opening my eyes to this other world of awesomeness. It's not often that you appreciate someone getting you addicted to something. Keep up the great work.

Sincerely,

Ican'tgiveyoumynamebecauseit'salongstoryanditcouldgetmeintrouble.

I truly love that this letter ends in utter mystery. We should have some kind of twitter contest for people to come up with the best explanation for why we can't know your name! #mysteryroamer

Yeah, this letter has it all, suspense, intrigue, friendships mysteriously halted, hope for a reunion and then cryptic anonymity... all I can really say, is... YOU WIN.

Dear Robert,

A little too sleepy, really. I wish there was more to this letter. I wish there was more to this issue! But for once: A cliffhanger that made me think.

Andrew J. Shaw

I'm a little sleepy, too. *yawn* Thanks for the thrilling letter, AJS.

I wish this response was longer, but sadly, there's nothing I can do about it.

Dear Kirkman and other person,

I noticed that you guys have been printing a lot of mail from angry fans appealing for Carl's life, but I'm writing to you to say that Carl needs to die. That kid's been

shot 2 or 3 times now, and I really feel like you owe the fans a good death this time. Heck, I look forward to seeing him come back as a Zombie so he can get shot and die again.

After that, I would appreciate it if you made a clone of him Marvel-style so that I can watch him die two more times. That way when the TV show catches up, I'll have seen Carl die no less than eight times and I will finally be able to forgive you for all the times that Carl has survived.

I'm not bad person, I'm just not much of a Carl fan. At all.

--Jay Elliott

Yikes, somebody is NOT Team Carl.

Well, Jay is going to be REALLY upset when we reveal that you have to shoot Carl in no less than TEN separate occasions to kill him.

***And ELEVEN shots bring him back to life!
#sharkjumped!***

Dear Kirkman,

Just write to say that you can kill and bring back Carl and Rick how many times you want, but Michonne and Andrea safety is my main reason to read the book, so please don't kill them.

Thankz, xoxo David Bohrer

I got a Michonne action figure finally, so I'm okay if Robert offs her. Thanks, McFarlane Toys!

***Well, you might want to skip next issue then...
#amIfaking?***

Hey gang,

So, first, the obligatory thank you. 87 issues of some of the best storytelling in print. Not in comics, not in fandom, in print. Period. And I appreciate it very much.

Second, I want to touch on the return of the telephone in issue 87. I think pretty much anyone who has suffered extreme loss during extreme stress can immediately relate to Rick's phone. It was, so far as I'm concerned, one of the most powerful--and authentic--devices Robert has included in the series. It was depressing to find out "Lori" was on the line, painful to watch him carry the phone for so long, a huge relief to see him put it away, heart-wrenching to have him reach for it again, and devastating to hear what it told him.

As a rule, I have been through far too much in this life to be honestly moved by fiction. That was a special, rare, and horrible moment. I probably re-read that page a half-dozen times.

Finally--where's Mom? We have to end on that as a last page? My God, guys... You do realize that at some point you are going to have to put Rick and Co. on hold--maybe to tell some other part of the apocalypse--just because it will no longer be even remotely plausible that these people can endure any more emotional trauma. I mean, I get that without conflict there is no drama, but it's a fine line between suffering and torture porn. ;)

Thank you again for all the hard and amazing work.

Greg Spyridis

Thanks for writing in about that whole segment, Greg. In terms of enduring any more emotional trauma, I cannot wait to find out what you think about Rick's confession to Andrea!

Things are certainly coming to a head. Stay tuned!

Dear Robert and Sina,

So far, I like how the series has focused on the community. It's an interesting new dynamic. The storyline about Abraham and Rosalita is falling a little flat right now because we know so little about them. How did they meet? Is there a story there? I don't even know what Rosalita did before. I think a lot of the (Washington) D.C. characters have interesting back stories that haven't made it onto the page yet. I'd love to see some of Eugene's flashbacks, too.

Love the series. Looking forward to seeing what happens with Carl.

- Robert

We'll give you more of Abraham and Rosita, for sure, but first Robert has to write in this Rosalita girl you keep talking about ;)

Wokka, wokka, Sina. Rosita and Abraham got together after the fall of civilization, after Abraham's family turned on him. They have back story--you maybe just forgot it. That said, we'll be learning more and more about some of the lesser featured characters in the book as time goes on. It's gonna be neat!

Hey Walking Dead,

Well... I'm just going to get to the point of this letter. I've written roughly over 10 letters in easily half that many months and still no letter printed in a single issue.. At first I thought it was a cool idea since TWD is one of the only comics I collect where letters are even printed (like...2-3 pages worth of letters), and a comic I actually enjoy enough to even attempt writing. Every time I check the letters I feel cheated, and it pretty much diminishes the chance of even reading the letters. Don't get me wrong because I'm not deluded enough to think I'm the only writer. 87 wasn't that bad, however it wasn't really good either. the only key points that came to mind after reading the issue were: that at least Rick feels a little remorse for putting Ron and his Mother in danger of losing their lives...very scary that Rick essentially cut her hand to get away, which I could understand given the situation, but to risk all four of their lives...wtf man? And that I'm finally glad that Carl is awake.. I promised myself that if Carl died that I would stop getting the book (you "dodged a bullet" there). I had hoped that the bullet wound didn't do too much damage, however with his response to Rick "where's Mom?" again wtf man? The damage wasn't too bad? You f*****d up his frontal lobe/ temporary memory man! I also don't think that you've earned my trust yet just because you've done 87 issues. Your trust is on the line each issue, and don't forget it Kirkman. Next time I'll ask some questions.

Thanks for always writing in. We do read every letter that comes in, but it's hard to print everyone when we also have to promote THE WALKING DEAD CHRONICLES, THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR, and so on. Your patience (and self-censorship) have paid off: you got printed!

Can't wait to see your questions.

Please be on the lookout for the McFarlane Toys action figures that will be in stores very soon. There are two lines: one based on the comics and another based on the show--WEEE! Gotta catch 'em all!

Jeremy Mulkins
California

p.s. I'm going to test a theory. hell... I doubt this will

get printed. THE GAUNTLET HAS BEEN THROWN!

I don't find gauntlets to be very flattering, so consider the gauntlet THROWN AWAY.

Hello all at TWD!

I want to start this, with much appreciation for Mr. Kirkman. I have LOVED your work for a few years now, especially since I'm literally BURNT OUT on capes and tights, rings and NORMAN OSBORN. I have a pull list, that I share with my girlfriend Andrea, and together we read only 2 books. The Walking Dead, and Sweet Tooth. I honestly feel these 2 titles are close, and fun to follow at the same time. Up to current, I've read TWD 3 times now, and when I saw what happened in "NO WAY OUT", I almost lost it. The Walking Dead has had me wondering about a few things lately. The biggest would be what is happening on the coasts? If it was me, I'd try to shack up in some oil rig or an island, with several small boats to hit the mainland for supplies. Limited crew means fewer zombies, right?

Or it means quicker mass suicide.

Yeah, not the most ideal place to live long term, in my opinion. Speaking of long-term, the book is all about long-term thinking for Rick and crew now, so we'll be seeing some new ideas emerge in upcoming issues.

The other would be, PLEASE DON'T KILL CARL. PLEASE DON'T MAKE CARL A VEGETABLE, BRAIN DEAD, OR COMPLETELY VOID OF MEMORIES. Over these 80+ issues, I've come to truly love Carl. I have years of collected volumes in superhero titles, but I don't really care for them as much as I do Carl. Mr. Kirkman, please don't break my heart.

Team Carl for the win. Does it bring you any comfort that if he dies, there's still TV Carl to live in his stead?

For now! (Just kidding, Chandler.)

All of this said, keep up the amazing work. Thank you for The Walking Dead Weekly, and I am SO excited for The Walking Dead Season 2.

Oh yeah, should I make an investment into anything in the future, it's ammunition.

Best of luck to all at TWD,
Ozzy

Robert's finally convinced me that the best investment for the future is a noose.

When did I get so morbid?! I blame Chris Hardwick for the noose thing... although that line of discussion, as I recall, came more from Jonah Ray.

Dear Robert and Sina:

So, Carl is awake and conscious? After dozens of angry letters about Carl getting shot at in the first place, I shudder to think what the reaction might be this time. Will people complain about how fast did he recover? Will they question the very nature of the wound and label the whole thing as unrealistic?

Oh well, I'll just keep on reading Letter Hacks (for the life of me, I can't remember a letter section as dramatic and fun as this one).

The Invincible letters column has been pretty intense these past few months. Invincibles don't mess around.

I love the way you spoil us. Besides previews (Witch Doctor & Elephantmen) now we have two chapters of Rise of the Governor.

So good, right?

Honestly, I didn't expect much of it. Seems to me like comic book writers are rarely good as novelists, and also after majoring in Literature I'm not particularly easy to please... but I have to admit that the novel seems promising. I haven't decided if I'll buy it or not, but at least I'm quite interested in it.

Here's hoping that our interviews with Jay Bonansinga win you over!

Honestly, I have to say anything that looks good and "literary" in the novel is all due to Jay Bonansinga, he's the bee's knees.

And now all I have to say us "I'm sure you won't print this". Hey, it worked for that guy in issue 87, right?

[Robert, please delete the line above, and this note]

Don't tell me what to do, Sina.

And by the way, this month a group of friends from the Bendis boards is putting out the 4th issue of an independent comic book anthology, this time it all revolves around horror stories. There is plenty of interesting stuff there (including a zombie story I wrote). If you want to order an issue you can do it here www.grayhavencomics.com

Sorry for the shameless self-promotion, but I figure one horror fan can forgive another horror fan.

Arcadio Bolaños

That self-promotion redefined shameless, and I know a thing or two about being without that! But true forgiveness comes from always wanting to support the independent creators.

Nice job, Arcadio... this self-promotion reminds me of that time in the letters column for issue 89 where I pretended I was responding to a letter, but really I was just promoting the new Walking Dead action figures from McFarlane Toys... TWICE!

Okay, read on for the conclusion of our interview with Jay Bonansinga, and make sure to pick up THE WALKING DEAD: THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR, which Jay co-wrote with Robert. It's a fantastic read! Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go get some popcorn and watch the season 2 premiere...

-Sina Grace

What what, party people in the house!

-Robert Kirkman

part two of our interview with

JAY BONANSINGA

co-author of

THE WALKING DEAD: RISE OF THE GOVERNOR



photo: Jim Newberry

Let's talk process: how do you work as a writer? Some writers stick to a "X number of pages a day" rule, or X hours... What's your method?

When I was in my twenties I thought I was Mickey Spillane and would write late at night, usually drunk, and the work was, as you can imagine, like warmed over Mickey Spillane written by a drunken grad student. But when I started getting published -- and had to support a family -- I started writing during the mornings, regular hours, with my ass shackled in the chair, until I produced at least twelve hundred words per day. For me, this is the only way to do it. You write five pages a day whether it sucks or it rocks... doesn't matter... you have to move forward, shark-like, feeding on the krill! It's really an altered state of consciousness -- not to sound too much like a drunken grad student -- but that's really what writing is. It's where you gradually get into a zone in which the world comes alive. It lives and breathes and grows in your brain. And it starts writing itself. And you get ideas when you least expect it -- at the grocery store, while you're dreaming, in the bathroom. I swear to God I often get ideas when I'm taking a leak.

This is a silly question, but the Walking Dead

books are black and white... does that translate in any way to how you and Robert worked on the book? Did you let that inspire the tone for the novel at all?

Not a silly question at all. The black and white is part of the fabric of this stripped-down emotional hellscape, in which everything is so close to the bone, and we see behavior in extremis, and it's in your face. That's another thing about comics -- for my money they are closer to films than books. They take place -- often -- in real time, right now, this second -- and they're often linear. Our prose is in present tense because of this. There is a brutal immediacy to it.

Do you think the world of The Walking Dead breeds Governor-type characters easily? Or can hope still thrive?

I think both extremes are true. I know it sounds kind of superficial and cliché but there has to be pitch darkness in order for there to be light. The Governor is one of the great villains because he seems like the guy that -- but for the grace of God -- we could all become if the breaks go a certain way for us. He's a guy who resorts to extraordinary measures in extraordinary times, but hey, it's war. In fact -- and again I'm not speaking for Robert here, and I would defer always to his take on things -- but I get the impression that The Governor is just as terrified as everybody else. His evil comes out of fear. He ain't Hannibal Lector -- he's the worst-case-scenario for the everyman. All of which is why the good characters are all the more powerful. They manage to take a different road -- the more difficult one -- and that's incredibly moving. I think about this when I'm working with Robert. Which fork in the road would I take? God, I pray it would be the good one...

Fans are always curious about Robert's soundtrack when writing. What was yours when tackling Rise of the Governor?

Another excellent question since this is a huge part of my process. Before I start any project I create a musical score – a sort of a “landscape” really – that will lock a tone and mood into my subconscious. It has to be about three hours long, which is a standard work session for me. It’s often made up of both film score music and ambient music. I can’t work with a lot of lyrics going on around me so the tracks tend to be instrumental. Also, there’s a weird counter-intuitive quality to the stuff that works for me. In other words, the “louder and harsher” the story, the softer and more moody the music needs to be. For *Rise of the Governor*, I wanted to tap into the poignant, heartbreaking, human drama going on beneath all the flying guts. I selected low, deep, doom-laden, droning stuff like Dead Can Dance and Eno’s environmental stuff and the film scores of Thomas Newman, Howard Shore, Bernard Hermann, Tom Tykwer, and Hans Zimmer. Also, because music is like color, I like to throw in weird little contrasts such as “The Thieving Magpie” by Wendy Carlos. Anyway, to give you a better idea, I’ll provide a sampling:

“Closer (Precursor)” by Nine Inch Nails from the CD *The Downward Spiral*. “Energy Fools the Magician” and “Chemistry” by Brian Eno from *Eno Instrumental 1*. “Bela Lugosi’s Dead” by Bauhaus from the LP 1979-1983. “An Echo of Night” by Brian Eno and Harold Budd from the album *The Pearl*. “Hand Covers Bruise” and “The Gentle Hum of Anxiety” by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross from *The Social Network*. “Transmission 2” by DJ Shadow from the CD *Endtroducing*. “Hopeless Emptiness” by Thomas Newman from *Revolutionary Road*. “Shadow Magnet” by Lisa Gerrard from the CD *Duality*. “Journey to the Line” by Hans Zimmer from *The Thin Red Line*. “The Fifth Column” by Photex from the CD *Risk Vs. Reward*. “Time” by Hans Zimmer from *Inception*. “Firesuite” by Doves from the CD *Lost Souls*. “The Game” by Howard Shore from *The Game*.

For fans of *The Walking Dead* comics (and novel!), what literature would you recommend to them?

I know I’m going to date myself, since nowadays, when I mention anything published or recorded or filmed before like fifteen minutes ago, I’m accused of being an old, outdated, burned out hippie, but here goes. In a completely unscientific, unauthorized, uncalculated series of recommendations, let me give it up for a few of my favorite zombie and/or apocalyptic works:

Book of the Dead (1989, Bantam Books). I think this was a paperback original when it came out at the height of the horror boom, edited by the bad boys of splatterpunk, Skipp and Spector. For my money, this is the best stuff ever done in zombie fiction.

With a forward by George Romero, and authors such as Stephen King, Ramsey Campbell, and Robert McCammon working at the peak of their powers, it just simply tears ass!

The sequel *Book of the Dead 2: Still Dead* (1992) is just as good, really, with an amazing story by Dan Simmons called “This Year’s Class Picture,” which is absolutely heartbreaking.

Swan Song (1987, Simon & Schuster). Sure, everybody mentions *The Stand*, and rightfully so, but for me, for some reason, *Swan Song* hit me like a ton of bricks. Not only is it an epic, apocalyptic survival tale in the classic mode, but it’s also subversive and sexy and weird and gross and touching and unforgettable!!

The Road (2006, Alfred A. Knopf). I’m almost embarrassed to mention this one since it enjoys such high praise – not the least of which is the Pulitzer – but I have to say, sometimes you have to face the facts that writing great horror is not in any way slumming or pulpy or beneath one’s talent, as some pretentious critics would have you believe. I know it sounds like I’m trying to kiss Robert’s ass (yet again), but I would put this incredible survival story, that includes moments of horror that will uncork the top of your head, right next to Robert’s *The Walking Dead* comic. They are literary equals in every way, and the fact that they each sort of surfaced in a similar time-line says something about us, about our world, about where we’re going. I’m not sure I want to go there, but if McCarthy and Kirkman are correct, at least we’ll have love in our hearts when the shit flies.

Is there any character you would love to tackle in the *Walking Dead* universe that you haven’t dealt with already?

Well, again, at the risk of sounding predictable, my favorite character in *The Walking Dead* universe is Michonne. I have offered Robert free lawn care services for the rest of his natural life if he would make Michonne one of our subjects in a future book. I adore that character.

Thanks for your time, Jay!

Special thanks to Brendan Deneen, for setting up the interview, and all of his hard work on the book.

THE WALKING DEAD: THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR, by Thomas Dunne Books, a division of St. Martin’s Press, will be on sale October 11. Order your copy today!

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Hello All!

Well, I'm speaking in future tense here, but we're two episodes into the newest Walking Dead season, and I'll be curious to see what you all think. All I can say is that we owe a great debt of gratitude to the fine folks at AMC for giving it their all. Thanks! But enough about that!

Check it out! Rick and Andrea- snogging! What is their paparazzi name? Rickdrea?

Season 2 of the TV show is pretty awesome so far, isn't it? I'm extremely pleased with how things have turned out.

You're the best writer ever, and I'm still gonna say that after you kill Rick and nuke the shark or jump the fridge.

#imnotveryfunny.

But anyhow, I was seriously worried you were going to press the reset button with Carl, throwing all the great character development out the window.

But NOPE, he's the same Carl, and will hopefully stay that way for a long time.

LOL JK HE PROBABLY HAS BRAIN DAMAGE

So some not funny questions.

1. What's with Andrea? She's acting like a total bitch. I feel bad for Spence, he really didn't do anything wrong, AND he risked his life when the zombies were attacking to go save her!

Plus he was right about his dad, I don't care if he lost his wife, that guy was straight up silly and the dude shot Carl, that's NOT ok.

Team Spencer.

Well, Spendrea is a better nickname...

2. Jon Bernthal is an awesome guy. Tell whoever's running the show now, (dumb amc) to keep him around for at least 2 more episodes.

You're right and you're wrong. Jon Bernthal is an awesome guy, but there is nothing dumb about the fine folks of amc. I mean it! But watch out: Brian Bockrath is a sly fox!

3. Wouldn't it be ironic if Max Brooks was a zombie?

It would be so raven.

4. Why do you keep playing musical chairs with the creative team on haunt? Who do you think you are? Bendis? (That last part was funny because he's actually pretty consistent with creative teams.)

Ask the Haunt letters column!

ok this letters long enough thanks for not bashing me too hard and keep up the goo- WAIT. What am I doing?? Sending a NICE letter. I can't do

that. You'll get lazy!!! uhhhhhhhhhhhhh

sahevbadCARLdewfwadbYOU SHOT HIMsdnbfjsYOU SUCKdgnsdgijvnbABY KILLERdjhbvsfs

Ok... I hope that helped.

Consider me not lazied.

love,
dalton

obligatory p.s.

You should totally go to Sundance, I have a movie playing there and I wanna high five you. And Sina too because I'm sure she's a pritty cool guy.

Would you do that for a skinny 16 year old child with his dreams ahead of him? :3

oh and go to House of Secrets in Burbank. It's a good store. And Meltdown too. They be great.

We'll try to make it out to Sundance, but we'll probably be hanging at House of Secrets and Meltdown instead.

When is Andrew J. Shaw going to be a zombie in the book? When he is, please have him say "Guh... uhIThinkYouAreFullOfShit" or something so we know it's him.

Love,

Your Readers

(But mostly Lisa in MN)

On it.

Actually, Sina. I hate to pop in and correct you but Andrew J. Shaw appeared as a zombie in issue 83 of the comic. He's tricky to spot--but he's in there. Now we just need to get him a cameo in the TV show. Fingers crossed!

Hello TWD team!

It is that week in my house where we are replacing the emergency earthquake supply and eating the old food before it expires. This made me think: how are Rick and the gang still managing to eat canned goods that are several years old without getting ill?

Michael Nguyen
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

As someone who persists off canned food (what? I sacrifice food luxury for expensive summer scarves), I know nothing of the expiration dates on canned goods.

Well, I'll jump in. Canned goods range between one year and three years with their expiration dates. Soup lasts a year and half, for instance. I have canned salmon in my pantry right now... that is

good until 2014... mmm, delicious.

Now, you may THINK years have passed in this book, but with the coming of winter in the recent issues, we've barely entered our second year. Remember, winter came in issue 7 for the first time. So it's been, I'd guess, 15 months since Rick woke up, so we're about 16 months into the zombie apocalypse--and canned goods will last a little bit longer... and oddly enough, this very topic is discussed, in our next issue...

So I've already said too much.

Hello Ms. Sina and Mr. Kirkman,

Long time fan, first time writer. You guys are awesome, best comic in years, etc etc. I'm sure you hear a lot of that. I do love the comic but one thing startled me when I read the Letter Hacks of issue 88. Mr. Kirkman answered a question from a fan which asked if he ever regretted killing of any characters. To which Mr. Kirkman responded by saying that yes, he does, then he listed most of the major characters that died, saying that he wishes he could write more of them. Reading through the list however, I noticed one peculiarity....Glenn was on it... Which made me take a double take. Now I'm not that upset that Glenn is going to die, so many of my favorite characters have died that I feel kind of desensitized to it.(though Carl getting his face shot off really surprised the hell out of me) But I digress, was this a mistake? Is Glenn's time in this comic coming to an end? I hope not, just think of the repercussions on Sofia.....

Well I just wanted to know, and if it was an accident, and Robert accidentally let loose a very important spoiler... Well, I will still act surprised when I read the comic.

Keep up the good work,
Alex Kapolka
Lawrence, New Jersey

Who knows? All I can say is that if you remember NO WAY OUT, Glenn certainly thinks he's on the road to deadsville. Shawn Kirkham thinks Andrea's the next big name to die (look at all of Rick's other ladies).

I thought Glenn already died. That hasn't happened yet...?

Hey guys,

I think the WD has become a little too watered down for my taste. I blame the TV show a bit. Before the TV show, it was like Rick and crew were swimming down the Amazon, and you didn't know if they'd get eaten by alligators. Before the TV show, there was true tension.

Now, the guys are on a boat cruisin' down the Amazon and occasionally they're surprised by an alligator from the safety of their boat. Michonne has been watered down. Abraham has been watered down. And Rick has most certainly been watered down. Maybe they're maturing, maybe it's the mostly safe confines that they've been living in and maybe the tension will return, but I'm not digging this watered down Walking Dead. Flashes of padding for the trades ran through my mind.

I jumped in on issue #13 and have been reading ever since. I thought about jumping off on issue #87, but I picked up issue #88 for one more ride on the Walking Dead Amazon boat. Sorry to go, but for me, the tension is gone. The Walking Dead has become too rote. It has been great though. Thanks for the ride!

Chris
-Ramona, CA

Well, if we can't please you... that's one thing. Robert is definitely not one to pad things for trades (trust me: we've had fights about it). The series is definitely on a different shift leading up to some bigger events in issue 100, but it's not the kind of absolute horror like around issue 50. This is a continuing story of survivor horror, and the tides are changing (if we're going with body of water metaphors).

You know who's been watered down? Friggin' Eugene! I need!

There are always quiet periods in the book, like Sina says, things are about to get pretty crazy, but I'd like to go on record and say I don't want anyone out there buying any comic they're not totally into. That's just crazy. People work too hard to waste money on something you don't love. I think buying out of habit is a big problem with our industry. There are so many great books out there, you should try something else if you're ever unhappy with a book. If I may make a suggestion, if you're unhappy with The Walking Dead, you should try out this new series coming out from Image called Go Fuck Yourself. It's pretty awesome.

Sorry... I just couldn't resist. I am sincere, up until that last comment. Only buy what you like!

Robert and Sina,

I'd like to start by thanking Robert for coming out to the San Diego Comic Con! Although I missed the Walking Dead related panels, I did happen to bump into him on the show floor and photobomb a picture with him and a young fan. His response, of course, was to force that young woman and I to take a photo together so he could do the same to us, and hilarity of course ensued.

That's my Kirkman!

Now, on to business. There's been a lot of foreshadowing in the comic these past few issues, and so I wanted to ask a few questions about what they might be leading to. Now, of course, you can't outright list spoilers here, but if you give me the old "nudge-nudge wink-wink" I'm sure we can come to an understanding.

1. Carl is missing an eye. The Governor, after what should have been a fatal treatment from Michonne, was also missing an eye. What will cause the falling out between Carl and his father, and how will he travel back in time to take the dead Governor's place and launch that vengeful assault on the prison? And, in his final moments, will he realize the futility of trying to alter the past?

Read Rise of the Governor. You're wrong.

2. Prosthetics. You know the issue had to come up at some point, with two cripples in the Grimes family. But where will the doctor get the hand and eyeball that Carl and Rick will respectively have attached? And more importantly, can Carl fire his gun with the hand that is emerging from his skull?

Read The Sun Also Rises. I can't deal.

3. Finally, I need to know one last thing - is Andrea's character design based off of Sina's appearance? Because in my head, I always picture them the same way.

I just expired. Robert- throw me out, because I have literally expired.

Sina is much prettier than Andrea. Trust me.

Thank for listening, and keep up the good work you two. And remember Robert! Nothing will let Sina know he's doing a good job like a nice firm slap on the bum.

-David Thomson

I don't know how I could possibly die twice. But here I am, barely thrashing from the ashes, already turned to molten crisp death.

Heh.

Dear Sina & Robert,

Thank you for publishing my letter in Issue 88 it really made my day. However in Robert's response he listed Glenn [You should probably remove his name if you print this letter] as one of the characters he regretted killing. As of the end of issue 88 Glenn was still alive. Maybe you just put this in there as a joke to see if anyone was paying

attention (I hope this is the case). Maybe you are just testing that study that said spoilers don't affect people's enjoyment of stories. Maybe you're just trying to increase sales for the issue 90 where you say "Glenn will soon regret his decision." Best case scenario you have caused me undo emotional distress, Glenn is by far my favorite character. Worst case scenario you have caused me emotional distress AND spoiled part of your own story, which you are typically very good at not doing. I propose the following restitution:

Robert, for causing emotional distress you should send me one of your comics signed by you.

Sina, for allowing this spoiler to get printed you need to convince Robert to release one of those oversized slipcase hardcover editions of the complete Astounding Wolf-Man

Best punishment ever!!!!

As always I will settle for a new Tech Jacket miniseries.

Best settlement ever!!!!

Thanks,

Tommy Orr

P.S. - Is that last Pilot Season book, Hardcore, ever going to come out?

Out of my jurisdiction. Robert?

Brian Stelfreeze is still working on the art. It's taking way too long to come out, but I can say... at least it'll be BEAUTIFUL when it's released. I'm hoping it'll be out before year's end. As of right now, I think he only has two more pages to do.

Hello good sirs, and lady!

I'm glad the heat from the whole Carl thing is dying down, honestly, people were overreacting just a bit. That aside, I just got done reading issue 88 and I have to say, well done Kirkman. I love that you pace yourself with the speed of series. Especially after "ohmygodwereallgonnadie" story arcs like the previous one. It's nice to have some time to catch your breath! I bring this up, because the TV series was doing a great job with that as well...and that is where my question lies. By now, I'm sure you're about to get several letters asking about the whole Frank Darabont. I also know that, chances are you can't really talk about it. So, I really only have one simple question. Should we be worried? The first season was amazing, and although it did take a few episodes for my nerd-anxiety to subside from the changes, I was really-really happy with what they did. The news of Frank's departure, well, worries me. So now is the time to either ebb my fears, or inflate them Mr. Kirkman. What's it going to be?

The show is aces, don't worry. Keep calm and carry on.

I can't say how proud I am of the second season of the show. It's better than season one in just about every possible way. While losing Frank on the show has been difficult, it has remained a "behind the scenes" problem and will not, in any way, affect what you see on screen. And by the time you read this, you should have some pretty good evidence of this in the first two episodes... and really, the season just gets better from there.

Oh, and one final thing. I heard if you say something negative in your question it automatically gets printed. So, you don't have enough fat people, blah blah blah. Add some fat zombies. ramble ramble.

With all my fanboy love,
Richard Ginesi.
Orange, CA

I guess we could throw a few more fat people... exactly what BMI range were you looking for?

Fat people... on it!

Hey Kirkman,

It was about 10 months ago when my cousin got me into TWD by lending me books 1 & 2. I was hooked on them right away and ended up getting the compendium for Christmas. I couldn't stop reading it and I still can't. I know you get tons of mail like this, but I thought it was pretty cool that TWD was the first comic I ever read in my life, and now I'm reading everything else you've written.

Anyways, this book keeps getting better and better! I'll admit, when I started #88 I was thinking it would be really slow but I know that you're in the middle of something big right now (pretty crazy considering the shit that's already gone down since they've been in the community). So I've got no complaints... I'm just playing the waiting game every month until you finally throw it all on us "with the one you like to call 'The Big One'" (I hope you caught that). Here's some numbered questions for you:

1. Is there any chance that you'll collect all 4 issues of The Walking Dead Survivor's Guide into a TPB?

Yes! Next month!

2. Will season 2 of TWD stay a little bit more true to the book? Is there anything you might be able to spill about the locations Rick & Co. might be travelling to this season? I know we've already seen Hershel's farm in the trailer.

Yes and no! It's going to continue being its own organic creature, with similar landmarks (hehehe).

Hershel's farm...

3. What can we expect for issue 100 in terms of extras?

Our lips are sealed! Stay tuned!

4. How soon after issue 96 comes out will we be seeing the compendium #2? I don't know if I can hold out too much longer before I decide to get TPBs from here on out.

Compendium 2 will be out a little bit into the fall. Those books are rather cumbersome to print!

Keep up the amazing writing Kirk... and to Charlie, Cliff, & Rus, the art and lettering is looking as good as it ever has. You guys haven't disappointed me yet out of a whole 7 years' worth of issues!

P.S. I recently got my other cousin hooked on TWD a few months ago, and now HE'S hooked as well. Now I'm just trying to push him on to Invincible!

Great! We'll keep making them, if you keep pimping them!

Hey Robert and Sina,

I'm a new reader to TWD, I must say this is the fucking best zombie story ever, it's also my first comic series.

I read issues 1-84 in less than a month, thanks to the trades. I bought issues 85-88 at a comic store. If I would have known about TWD I would have bought every original issue from day one. I must say I'm pretty sure Lori isn't dead. I feel like Carl will grow to be a lone leader soon. And is it just me or in past issues when Rick had a beard I swear I felt like he resembled GOD. I will continue reading this series to the very end I'm interested to see how the zombie Apocalypse started and how you guys end it. I don't recall any zombie film that has ended with the Apocalypse actually explained & over.

Reinaldo J Rivera

To me, Rick looks more like Bon Iver with long hair, or Kurt Cobain with a fuller beard. The only way you'll truly know whether or not Lori survived is to KEEP READING!

Also: You'll never know how this apocalypse started. Not really RK's prerogative.

Word.

Hey Gang,

I would like to commend you on a fine work of drama that you had created. In case you care where your fans come from, I was introduced to TWD by a group of friends, who had been raving about an upcoming AMC show that was based on the comic book series ... I had not heard a word about TWD before that point. The show was OK; admittedly, I was not blown away by it. However, it was enough to be convinced to read the comic by one of the aforementioned friends, who pressed a thick volume into my hands titled TWD: Compendium One, and with the seriousness of a priest in prayer, somberly intoned "Go forth and embrace your new religion". The rest, as they say, is history.

Now, before you get your panties in a knot, and decry the lending of the compendium as a fucking evil foul play that only the Governor could muster, I assure you that I did not touch that compendium. In a true fashion of a (very handsome) nerd, I had found a dedicated TWD iPad app, and purchased everything that it allowed me to purchase, up to and including issue #88 ... I feel your work deserves at least that much from me.

Hey, thanks comixology!

With that out of the way, let me bemoan the survival of Carl. I was just as shocked as the next guy when the bullet tore through the kid's face with what I imagined to be a very satisfying crunch of shattered bone, and a loud pop of the exploding eyeball. "At last!" I exclaimed, startling my lovely wife, and terrifying my cowardly dog into a puddle of urine that quickly formed underneath it, "All links have been severed!" You see, it's not that I hated Carl; I was never particularly fond of the kid, true, but I had never wished any ill to befall him. Rather, I was hoping that Rick would now be freed from his pre-apocalyptic life and begin anew in this cruel, cruel world. Thus far, his actions had been motivated solely by the safety of his family ... I desired him to find new reasons to exist. Subsequently, Rick experienced an epiphany, exalting the idea of a strong community, albeit Carl's safety was again the underlying rationale.

You're just as twisted as Rick (see: The Walking Dead 87).

Which leads me to my next point. What TWD captured me with were not the zombies, however convenient a threat and reason for fall of civilization. No. What captured me was the post-apocalyptic setting, and the drama of survival and adaptation forced upon masterfully crafted characters. After running for their lives in search of safe haven, I am glad that the group is finally settling and attempting to build a community ... nay, a new society. The idea of rebuilding, and perhaps reinventing a civilization appeals to me greatly. I hope that you guys continue with that theme for some time, and explore it in depths that the roaming undead can only take so far. For the impatient readers, plenty of opportunities for danger and drama in that settled state will undoubtedly present themselves ... you are already developing such opportunities in issue #88 with the foraging parties, and the brewing mutiny. So, what I'm trying to say is: just give me more civilization building, goddamn it!

Well, this is the other side of the whole "watered down" argument.

A'ight ... thanks!

Ireney Berezniak
Calgary

P.S. I love the idea of tie-in novels. I hope that also develops into a long running effort spanning multiple volumes.

Me too! From what I hear, Robert is having a blast working on the second novel, and the reviews have been great! You all picked up THE WALKING DEAD: THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR, by Robert and Jay Bonansinga, right?

Hey!

First, I'd like to thank you for introducing me to the world of comic books!

Second, I'd like to say you guys have the best comic in my opinion but your comics don't come out enough only like once a month and I finish reading it before I finish taking my shit (sorry for the detail but it's true)

YOU try making an Eisner Award-winning, NYT bestselling comic at a rate faster than once a month! And when you do- tell us how you did it!

Also: GRAPHIC, dude.

Third, 3-D comic to celebrate your hundredth issue?!? I know it's 12 issues away but that would be the best thing ever!!

Chad Heche

3-D black and white comic...?

Dear Robert Kirkman,

With The Walking Dead 86 you've exactly captured what's wrong with our country today.

America has been stuck in a rut since September 11, 2001, because seeing how quickly and violently everything can be taken away from you changes a person's psyche, as we've been witnessing in Rick.

We have forgotten about our fellow Americans and have shifted into a practice of self preservation under the excuse that we are doing what's best for our families or constituents. And to justify our actions, we label any contrary effort as socialist, as if making decisions with a community in mind is inherently evil. I wouldn't be surprised if you are labeled as a communist for using the word "community."

But this nation is made of the greatest people on earth, and your book has renewed my hope that we will come to our senses so that our community can be allowed to heal. It's not the color of our skin or how much money we earn that makes us Americans, it's our shared belief that all humans are created equal and should be treated with dignity and respect. America has been behaving like Rick, and while it's understandable, it's inexcusable and it must stop. We need to remember that we are a community and we need to start making decisions that are best for the community. I hope this book will, in at least some small way, bring us there. My thanks to you Mr. Kirkman.

Paul Im

PHAT. Thanks for your observation, Paul! I wonder if fans will take to your words.

Thanks again for continuing to write the greatest letters ever. I cannot wait to see how you are all digging the storyline building up to the amazing issue 100 (I really can't believe we're almost there!), and your thoughts on the much-anticipated season 2.

We'll be back again in a month, with more of this Rickdrea mayhem, Community building, and more.

Oh, and: HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

-Sina Grace

Halloween already? Sheesh! Thanks for writing in everyone.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome back, roamers,

Well, you did it. We have record-setting ratings, and a third season guaranteed. Congrats to Robert, Glen, Gale, David, Frank, Greg, the cast and crew, as well as everyone at AMC (looking at you, Jen Inkles). We all shared some champerz and chardz to celebrate.

As excited as I am to bring you the newest issue of The Walking Dead, I'm just getting more and more anxious for issue 93 and all that lies ahead!

Dear Robert and Sina,

Walking Dead has pulled me back into comic books after a 10 year hiatus! I haven't kept a comic file in over a decade, but this book made me start again so congrats. I have for you a question, a comment, a suggestion and a request.

The question:

Why do you portray covers of Andrea doing something that doesn't happen in the comic (making out with some dude in the bell tower, choking a guy)? Every other cover seems to have been relevant to the story as far as I can tell.

We do these covers months in advance. Robert knows thematically where a character is going, but their actions in the issue may not resemble what is on the cover. I'll have to investigate this Andrea trend... I know our Maggie/ issue 77 cover was also more thematic than literal, too.

Bah! Andrea totally choked Spencer in 89, you didn't notice?!

The comment:

It's okay to hurt, maim or kill Carl. This book is about real life events with one minor caveat: zombies. Kids get hurt in real life and it would only be exponentially worse with undead maniacs wandering around.

How about making him dead inside?

The suggestion:

That being said, I do not want to see Carl die. In fact, I believe that Carl should eventually take over as leader of "The Group," whomever it ultimately retains from the current group or contains in the future. It would be totally wicked to have him take over as lead character after, say, issue 100. I would love nothing more than to see issue 101 start with the words TEN YEARS LATER and feature Carl looking all bad ass, grim and well seasoned from a life of early childhood development in zombie hell. He would be the ultimate anti-hero. Rick and the rest can all bite it as far as I'm concerned.

Yeah, not going to do that. It's a fun idea, but not quite on Robert's trajectory. Can't believe you're so eager to do a jump forward.

The request:

Please bring the edge back to TWD! These last few issues (just read 89) have been rather dull and uneventful what with the rebuilding of the community and all. The only zombies to be seen occur over a scant page or two, and are rarely featured on the cover anymore. I'd even take a skirmish with some post-apocalyptic, degenerate humans (Lord knows there'd be enough of them milling around), just to spice things

up. You could solve this problem by upping the page count, so as not to alter the pace of your plot development. I'd pay the extra buck in production costs.

Anyway, thanks for all the good times. You have reaffirmed all of my doubts in humanity.

Thanks!
Nelson Braendle Austin, TX

We may be hinting at your last request as of this last page. I can't get into it, but anyone wearing THAT outfit can't be good news.

Or can they?

We'll just have to find out... WON'T WE!

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I've been checking my TWD iPad app for issue #89 everyday for the past 3 weeks. TWD is my first comic and #89 was the first time I had to experience the awful hardship of waiting. It all started after watching the trailers for season 2. I had been aware the series was based off a comic book but the trailers made me realize just how much I missed the walkers. That's when I decided to check out the comic and it's been downhill since then. In a few short days I had purchased all the 6 packs and single issues to bring me current. I'm truly frightened when I think about waiting an entire month for each new issue. I already have the shakes for #90 and this is the first day.

With that out of the way, I'll write comments, questions, responses section like the normal folks do.

So I was reading the letter hacks in #89 and someone had mentioned dismantling a house for parts to repair the wall. Sina responded with a few uses for keeping extra houses in the community which got me thinking. Why aren't there a few strategically located houses that are chosen to be heavily fortified with a weapons stash and maybe a small amount of food? They could be used as bunkers during unexpected security breaches.

Getting a surplus of food seems to be the issue right now...

The very next person began writing about his recent dissatisfaction for Rick and just as I was reading it I thought to myself, he needs to read page 22. Immediately after, I read Sina take the words right out of my mouth-err-brain. Coming from such a concentrated view of TWD series, I've really been able to watch Rick grow and change in so many ways. I can easily appreciate him on his good and bad days.

We're twins- you and I.

Back to Carl.. The image of him shot in the head was so hard to lose. I must have walked around my house for days just mumbling "my god, Carl... oh my god". Actually I didn't say Carl's name because I know it's only a matter of time that my girlfriend will pick up the comic and I didn't want to give anything away, especially that!

It's rather tough selling volume 14 at conventions, because people leaf through the volume asking out loud "Have I read this one?" Chad and I will just look at each other and tell the fan, as calmly as possible: "YOU'D KNOW, STOP LEAFING THROUGH."

Heh... awesome.

Thank you for this story, it really is something special. I love the zombie genre and there's nothing that compares to this piece of work.

P.S. The Witch Doctor is my second comic ever and I enjoy it quite a bit too. Oh yeah, looking forward to The Rise of The Governor!

Thanks,

Zac Boyles

Witch Doctor is amazing! Buy all of your friends the trade paperback next month as a holiday present!

Same goes for Rise of the Governor! I've already heard tell of stores selling out on the first day, so hurry up why don'tcha! Also: congrats to Robert, Jay and everyone at St. Martin's for making Rise of the Governor a NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER! Score!

Please buy everything associated with me and Skybound in general. I have two very young children, and by the time they're ready for college, it'll be a million dollars a week, and it won't teach them a thing, and they'll still be living with me well into their thirties, my home will become a worn down shanty town their families live in, I'll have ten grandchildren crawling the walls and my wife and I will live in a world of pain and misery... and plane tickets will be off the charts expensive, and we'll need two one-way tickets to anywhere else.

So keep that in mind. Things may seem great for me now, but the future is a grim, dark and scary place.

Might I recommend a Witch Doctor trade paperback?

To The Walking Dead,

My faith, and patience has been rewarded, and I feel like a man on the moon right now. Thanks for printing my first letter Kirkman and The Walking Dead-- my thoughts on issue 89 were mixed because I detested how Rick even entertained the thought of why Carl is alive if he isn't his "boy" anymore.. unless Rick has cracked, I don't see how he could not think that Carl wouldn't change through this entire tragedy. I thought this was out of character for Rick, especially after the savagery of issue 57, and that Rick would do anything for Carl-- as if Rick was the same man as before....come on Kirk (I couldn't resist) I admit the ending was strong and I'm excited for the next issue. Now onto the questions!

1) Have you thought about asking other artists to do covers for TWD so that Adlard can concentrate more on interiors? i.e. R.M. Guera, Becky Cloonan, Eduardo Risso, or JAE LEE

We have had guest covers in the past for variants (Tommy Lee Edwards, Lukas Ketner, Ryan Ottley and Erik Larsen, to name a few), but it wouldn't be fair to Charlie (nor his fans) to have someone else do covers. We'd rather treat it as a fun surprise than a marketing ploy.

2) Can you have a zombie cameo in TWD Season 2?

Nope.

3) Will Carl get a makeshift eye patch or some type of bandages to conceal his wound? I don't think the cool cowboy hat will do anymore.

Are the two mutually exclusive? :-)

4) When will we get a NO ONE IS SAFE storyline again?

When no one is safe.

p.s. I CAN'T WAIT FOR SEASON 2 OF TWD AND HERSHEL'S FARM!.. I have to admit season 1 was a letdown..

Jeremy Mulkins

Hey, whatever you felt about season one is your opinion, but it's my personal opinion that season two will knock your effing socks off.

Dear Kirkman,

I write this with no expectations of it seeing light of print, I just hope you receive it and acknowledge it.

I hate you. You have destroyed my sleeping pattern.

I have stayed up all night reading The Walking Dead. It's not 7:41 in the morning, and I'm still not done. I need to sleep, but how can I when there is such danger a-foot?!

Regards from England,
Sam

I'm glad Robert's doing his job right!

Whew!

To the dead and walking:

Way to pull through that incredibly traumatic last arc. "No Way Out" was reeeeeeally hard to read, but worth every minute for the conclusion. This last issue was almost funny though; Rick was like Big Bro in Gurrán Lagan for a minute ("Who the hell do you think I am!?!"). Can we get the officer some cool sunglasses now or something? Please? You know he could rock that look. Adjust them every now and then with his pirate hook... You know you wanna draw him with a pirate hook hand, Adlard. Kirkman, write it in pleeeeeease? :3

Thank you for continuing to impress with the great story guys! I'm truly sorry for anyone who actually quit after the horrors you let loose upon Carl. Poor bastard... *sniffle* Can't wait to see what you have in store for us next issue!

Sincerely,
Ryu in Cary, NC

Oh dear, it's already one (awesome) thing that we see a bunch of Rick Grimes look-a-likes at conventions, but is the next generation going to be Rick-as-pirate? Rick-as-lost-member-of-Fleetwood Mac?

If so: BRING IT.

Hey there!

It just doesn't seem like you please anyone anymore. It's sad really. You shoot Carl in the face and everyone gets all pissy. Then you have a couple of slower paced issues and guess what, everyone gets all pissy.

I get it. You have to come down a bit from the intense stuff, otherwise the highs just don't seem so high. Now the last several pages of #89... those were pretty fucking intense. And with that being said, the last 3 pages in particular gave me that fuzzy feeling I get when you guys are at your best.

Keep up the great work.
Thanks
Joe

It's hard making everyone happy. The nice thing is that you all keep coming back, and your trust in Robert is always paid off!

Heh, also, I should point out again, that in order to make these letters columns entertaining, we print the vast majority of negative mail we receive. The response to 90% of our positive mail would be "thanks." and that's boring so we don't print them.

It makes things seem a little more skewed than they are.

Dear greatness,

This is by far the best comic ever written. Although it is not perfect, I have an idea or two about how you can make it as close as it can get. First, get rid of Carl. Kill him, Exile him from the community, I don't really care. If you were to get rid of him, it would be better for everyone. The moment Carl entered the series, I slowly started to despise him. He just gets on my nerves. I mean, everyone cares that he's about to die, but do hear anyone complaining that Hershel died. Or Tyreese. I don't. Why is Carl so important? Is it because he's Rick's son, or people somehow like him? I'm not sure. With that out of the way, I do have a few questions. In a previous letter column, it says Axel was in a flashback or something. Please explain. Also, in The Walking Dead Survivors Guide, it shows pictures of Morgan and Duane having Christmas. I recently read the series over (only took a day or two) and I don't remember this happening.

The Morgan and Duane Christmas scene actually appeared in the Image Comics Holiday Special. We reprinted in the Compendium and the second Deluxe Hardcover collection.

And in the back of one of the single issues... although, I can't remember which. It's just not collected in the TPBs, unfortunately.

-Brian Creed
IL

P.S. why is Andrew J. Shaw so important?

He's been with The Letter Hacks for a while, and you can actually find him writing to non-Skybound books, too. He's just one of the guys, you know? Like Brian Bockrath.

Hi there!

It's sometimes a bit hard to get the latest Issue in time around here (Norway) and sometimes the copy ordered from overseas disappears, apart from that I really love the series and have a few small questions :

*Ever considered making an open ended rpg (or shooter) out of the comic where the player can decide on what he wants to focus on? (survive, find out what happened , make a stronghold etc , form a large group etc).

The upcoming Telltale Games Walking Dead video game is going to carry themes like that. We're definitely going the route of RPG over first person shooter. That's all I can say about it currently!

*What do you think about www.projectzomboid.com ?

I can take it or leave it.

*I get the feeling that anyone in TWD are disposable, is that right?

Sincerely
Rune.

Characters are not disposable. Robert has arcs and plans for everyone, and death is a large part of those arcs... when you're doing a long-form comic about the apocalypse, the beginnings and ends of lives must be explored.

Greetings oh great one,

I just finished issue 89 and I was shaking. Nicholas is in for hell! I love that Rick is back and holy shit is there coz gonna be hell to pay! The issue that Carl got shot made me physically drop the book to the floor, and I took a lap around my living room screaming "HOLY SHIT"!

Issue 89 had me shaking with excitement. "You're taking the community back? REALLY? From ANDREA? From ABRAHAM? From MICHONNE? From GLENN? From ME?" SON OF A BITCH THAT'S FANTASTIC! I walked into the local comic shop(bell's comics, grove city, PA) and the owner, Mark Bell, said "wait 'til you read the new walking dead issue, it gave me chills"...damn! As always, great writing and Charlie's art is tremendous! I have a 5 month old son, Jackson Archer, and I can't wait 'til he is old enough for me to get him hooked on all things Kirkman!

I read the letters every month and am tired of people bitching about slowness and nothing happening, one question. Any of you wankers writing comics? I thought so...shut it!

Thanks Robert, Charlie, Cliff, and Rus
-Ron Solo

Glad you had the appropriate reaction! And yes: the entire team does rock. Do we tell Charlie, Cliff and Rus that enough?

As for "bitching and slowness," this wouldn't be an enticing letters column if all we did was print letters that stroked Charlie's ego, right?

But stroking mine is awesome!

Hey Robert and Sina,

I'm a new reader to TWD, I must say this is the fucking best zombie story ever, it's also my first comic series.

Woo hoo! Now read Invincible, Witch Doctor, Super Dinosaur, The Infinite, and Savage Dragon!

I read issues 1-84 in less than a month, thanks to the trades. I bought issues 85-88 at a comic store. If I would have known about TWD I would have bought every original issue from day one. I must say I'm pretty sure Lori isn't dead. I feel like

Carl will grow to be a lone leader soon. And is it just me or in past issues when Rick had a beard I swear I felt like he resembled GOD. I will continue reading this series to the very end I'm interested to see how the zombie Apocalypse started and how you guys end it. I don't recall any zombie film that has ended with the Apocalypse actually explained & over.

Reinaldo J Rivera

There's no backtracking and explaining HOW the apocalypse began, but if you're the diehard Walking Dead fan you say you are, pick up the prose novel Robert wrote with Jay Bonansinga: RISE OF THE GOVERNOR. It's a great peek into the world as things began to crumble.

The last page of #89 may in fact be the definition of EPIC. Rick with the gun is one of the most, as the kids say, "badass" pages in all of comics let alone the series. Keep it up and don't be afraid to kill off anyone.

Best,

Michael

Sweet, thanks. Do we have your permission to kill off everyone and watch a whole 'nother community's story? #insane

Dear Sinatra Grace and Robert Kirkman (mostly Kirkman sorry Sina),

First this is for Sina, I'd sincerely like to apologize because for the longest time I thought you were a girl until reading LDB. (which is awesome btw it reads to me kind of like a realistic approach to Scott Pilgrim.) So much so in fact that I had a discussion with my fiancé about when we have a daughter that I'd like to name her Sinatra, I really fell in love with the name so I hope you wouldn't be offended if I named my daughter after you.

Compliment taken. You may name a female after me.

Anyway, onto Kirkman. You sir, are amazing, anything you touch seems to turn to gold, maybe you should just go ahead and change your name to Robert Midas. I've recently illegally downloaded all of Invincible and The Walking Dead and let me tell you, I'm completely and utterly stunned at what an amazing job you've done. Come February when my tax return goes through you can bet the hard covers of Invincible and The Walking Dead will be mine along with the trades of Super Dinosaur, and The Infinite (which I have legally purchased the first 3 issues already and I've gotta say amazing job.)

Sweet. Check out Science Dog, Astounding Wolf-Man, Brit, Battle Pope, and CAPES while you're at it.

Right on!

Invincible blew me away when I first started reading it, reminded me of a western Dragon Ball Z. I read all over the place spoilers of how Atom Eve dies and that killed me and then I got to that fateful moment only to be stunned that she comes back! Nowhere did I read that, I was in shock that I hadn't and absolutely overjoyed that she wasn't dead, so touché to you sir for grabbing hold of my emotions and playing with them to your whimsy.

I never made the Dragon Ball Z connection, but you're like the third or fourth person to bring it up... either way: KEEP READING.

But yeah this is The Walking Dead fan mail so I should probably get to my point. This series is absolutely amazing and touching in every way. I can't believe the impact some of the deaths over the course of this series has had in the fan mail its utter ridiculousness. But I've seen through your plan (whether you aware of it or not). I've noticed all the "main characters" you've killed off never really got much character development. Yes they were crucial to the story, but their characters never changed, they stayed the same boring characters, unadaptive to the changing world around them to the very end. While main characters you've kept have changed and you've given them a lot of development. So for any of you readers out there that are afraid of who's gonna die next, just look to see if that character has developed over the course of the story. Tyreese, didn't change much, dead. Lori, never really changed much, dead. Carl, dealt with killing Shane, getting raped, killing one of the twins, alive and dare I say it safe. Glenn, started as a young kid reckless and dangerous, now he has a wife and child and though he is still reckless he's starting to become aware of his recklessness and calming down for his family. Alive and

safe. I'm sure you see my point, make it a little less predictable, please sir I'm asking you to kill someone I won't see coming.

I don't know if I agree with this at all, but I walk away, and ask readers to chime in.

You do an amazing job and I wasn't trying to cut you down by any means I love this series, and I don't plan to "quit reading" or any of the nonsense other people pull. Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,
Tyler Truman.

P.S. - Is Carl still going to kill Shane in the show? He didn't in the scene that he did in the comic and it blew me away because Carl killing Shane was a huge part of making Carl who he is, and how dark and numb he's gotten to the rest of the world around him. So seeing an entirely different approach there was a little shocking. Just curious, 'kay I'm done now, have a great day.

You gotta keep watching to find out!

Greetings.

I have devoured these books since I first laid eyes on Volume 1 and my fellow "Walker Fanatic" brethren have joined me readily in this undertaking. Neither of us have EVER complained of grisly deaths or unfortunate twists of fate. However, the most disturbing comment I have read has been written outside of the main storyline, by Sina.

Ruh-roh.

One of the things that has always gripped me throughout the story has been hope. Whether it be the hope that civilization is indeed intact in some layer with a government of some sort hobbling along with infrastructure attempting to rebuild and begin the recovery from the epidemic. Or the hope that these stubborn, resourceful survivors will indeed press on and find a way to survive this filth plague of Walkers. But, in either case, I always held out hope.

Were the words of the CDC Doctor in TS-19 indeed prophecy? Is this our "Extinction Event?"

My hope shattered once I read Sina's comment in the Letter Hacks column of #85 where she pointedly quips "What? Everybody dies."

Later only to read at the end of #86 in the Letter Hacks column that Robert remarks "What's going to happen when Michonne dies?"

Wow. What a blow. These comments took a great deal of suspense out of the story for me. Please grip me again somehow. Restore my hope in some way, even if it is only to be later toyed with and shattered once again. I would prefer it be shattered however in dramatic story-telling fashion you skilled raconteurs! Don't kill me in a fan e-mail column while also sealing the fate of my two favorite characters and ANY that may EVER follow after them.

I do hope you accept the challenge and rise to it.

Thank you for everything else, Jon

P.S. Please understand that I assume it is given that I realize everyone has to die eventually, except of course super heroes of sorts, but the death I speak of is at the hands of a roamer/walker...

We appreciate your concern, Jon. Sometimes Robert and I make a few sarcastic remarks about the characters, and by no means are we using the Letter Hacks to spoil upcoming deaths (and at this very moment, I am using all of my will power to refrain from making a sarcastic "or are we" remark).

Rest assured: Robert would never let me be the one to tell you when someone is going to bite the bullet. We tease and try to add suspense to the 22 pages you get before the letters column, but we do not spoil it.

Everybody dies, man!

I apologize for not adding this to my original e-mail but it just occurred to me as I read some griping about the story lagging as Rick figures out more long-term plans to survive.

I, for one, enjoy the gritty realism you infuse in the story. I like to see how you imagine these people would be trying to survive, which is going to be goal NUMBER ONE in this type of situation. If this causes the story to "drag", then so be it. Possibly this perception is a testament to the "everything all the time/de-sensitized/instant gratification" culture we survive in. I like the details, the elaborate and realistic plans, because I identify with this. I think about what I would be doing differently or what Rick and the rest are doing that I would possibly never think of. I think this facet of the story lends a real edge to the experience making it that much more personable.

I say this to assure you that you will not be scaring myself or others that I know who enjoy TWD off if you choose to pursue this type of story-telling further.

Also, after reading a fellow fan's requests to make Rick "crazy or not" I can't help but think how skewed our baseline of "crazy" is when compared to a world where the dead not only walk the Earth but also are ravenous cannibals and all that you held dear as normal and secure has vanished.

Being crazy is clinically exhibiting "maladaptive" traits. To this point it seems that Rick's madness has aided him in adapting to his new environment. He has no outlets and holds up the facade for everyone else. If hearing voices helps him cope, then so be it. Once the voices start telling him to kill himself or others, well then they become a bit of a problem.

I just see looking at Rick as "crazy" as a misinformed and myopic perception. Our baseline for crazy in a Zombie Apocalypse has changed drastically.

Thank you for your time and efforts. You are appreciated.

Jon (again)

Thanks for writing in again, Jon. As of these past few issues, Rick is exploring his own sanity as well. There is gray area in this world, and I think it's half the fun trying to figure out what is right or wrong after an apocalypse.

TWD,
Issue 89 last page = Boner. Here is some more math for you... Rick > (Bruce Willis x Bruce Campbell x Arnold x Samuel L Jackson x Stalone x The Rock x Nicolas Cage x Jason Statham x Sigourney Weaver x Vin Diesel x Michael Biehn x Jet Li x Dolph Lundgren x Christian Bale x Michael Jai White x Betty White x Stone Cold x Mickey Rourke x Denzel Washington x Gary Oldman x Matt Damon x Mel Gibson x Harrison Ford x Mark Hamill x Carrie Fisher x Chow Yun-Fat x Donnie Yen x Kurt Russell x Antonio Banderas x Danny Trejo x John Travolta x Gerard Butler x Russell Crowe x Djimon Hounsou x Al Pacino x Steve McQueen x The Duke x Brad Pitt x Clive Owen x Manu Bennett x John Cena x Lou Ferrigno x Sean Connery x Manu Bennett x John Cena x Lou Ferrigno x Richard Dean Anderson x Mark Wahlberg x Tony Jaa x Jesse Ventura x Robert De Niro x Benicio Del Toro x Kirk Douglas x Liam Neeson x Eric Bana x Tommy Lee Jones x Hugh Jackman x Vinnie Jones x Clint Eastwood x Burt Lancaster x Charles Bronson)²... That's right... All of them multiplied together then squared. R. Lee Ermey, however, would still put up a good fight despite being 67.
Dan

Sick.

That's all I have for now. Continue watching the show, continue telling your friends, continue writing in.

Oh, and: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

-Sina Grace

Eat some turkey for me!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Last Walking Dead issue of 2011, y'all!

Editor Sina Grace here, and I cannot believe that we are counting down to issue 100. I just looked at my copies of issues 50 and 75, and all I can say is: we're going to blow you away eight months from now.

There's no room to chat: we've got an amazing preview of Ed Brubaker's return to Image: FATALE! Buy it please.

Return? I don't think Ed's ever done anything at Image before, has he? No... I checked. He hasn't.

Be sure to check out the preview for Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips' FATALE at the end of this comic!

Whoops! My bad! It feels like he's belonged here for years!

TWD Team,

Though I've been reading TWD monthly for some time now, this is my first time writing to the best letter hacks column in comics. Seriously, the Letter Hacks section is great; oh, and the comic is good too.

OK, now that that's out of the way: At last! Rick and Andrea! Rick&Andrea! Andrea+Rick! What's gonna happen? Sure, Rick's arm is wrapped around her, but maybe that's just adrenaline, etc. (Hope not!) More likely Andrea will now be eaten alive—by living people! Cannibalism? I mean, Rick's beaus seem to meet their fates in increasingly gruesome ways... Still, it just seems so natural, so right. I mean, when Rick finally bites it, who would you want taking over his parenting duties? And who's really strong enough for either to lean on?

Also, the mutiny was great (the final pages of issues 89 and 90 were both killer), but too short lived. I get that Rick's reaction to Mustache Mutineer strengthens the moral dilemma that Rick can't seem to escape, but still, I was ready for the proverbial shit to hit the fan. Gotta hand it to you, though, you got my heart racing when Glenn was running for his life. Which brings me to my next comment...

Really? Glenn's got a target on his back, a pentagram on his palm? He's a marked man? I guess better him than Andrea or Michonne, and it is about time that one of the Old Hands kicks the bucket. May I simply ask that Marcy or Millie or Maggie (OK, I knew her name all along) dies too? She's such a drag. (Weird that thus far I'm digging AMC's Maggie.) I just can't imagine Maggie still in the group after Glenn's gone. If, that is, Glenn is about to die. Lastly, are Rick and Abe going to throw down? Or maybe they'll form some kind of panel of leaders a la in the prison after Rick's meltdown. I'm excited for things to come.

Only time will tell. I certainly won't.

Thanks for the great book!

Jesse
Memphis, TN

P.S. Please don't kill Glenn; he's really nice.

**Glenn the character, or Steven the actor playing Glenn?
Either way: both really nice, both really dreamy.**

Dead SINA and r...

So with the end of civilization having been brought about... One thing we have learned is that doesn't stop our base impulses. Long story short, why with every female of proper age still boning everything that has a pulse, no one else has gotten pregnant yet. The end of civilization stops all forms of birth control dead and yet, no new babies? I mean, Glenn and Maggie have been going at it for what... 10 months or more? Where is Glenn Jr.? Abraham Jr. (double ?? for him, he gets around)? Andrea Jr.? (to be fair, Dale's swimmers may have been passed the canned goods expiration date). Lori's baby (I don't even remember her name anymore, J - something?) can no longer hold the title of "Most Gruesome Baby Death" in comic history. Make with the babies plz.

Your Fan - Jon

Well, contraceptives don't expire that fast.

If you want to get technical, the stress of being surrounded by constant terror of the undead could lead the ladies to stop menstruating. Or going beneath your regular BMI (which, when you're rationing food, can happen). I took female physiology, no joke.

Maggie and Glenn actually TRIED to have a baby for a while and couldn't for some unknown reason. So... it's been touched on a little bit. Maybe someone is already pregnant and I haven't revealed it!

P.S. Did they really have to show Shane getting a blue POLICE baseball hat in the AMC TWD season 2 trailer? It screamed alarm bells in my head, true TWD comic fans will know why.

Hehehehehehe!

I must say: I love how the last The Walking Dead TV series (The one the night before Halloween.) and this past issue kind of relates. We see Shane becoming darker and we see Rick talking about how corrupted he's become, in the respective TV series/comic series spectrum's. Character development is key, naturally.

In regards to Rick talking about his eyes and how he isn't fit to lead (Or, something along those lines.) in a civilized society, does that mean we'll be seeing a new leader emerge? Even for a short time, I think it would be interesting. Rick is a great leader, but if he was to simply follow what he thought would be simplest he would resemble an evil dictator. No one wants that. Also, please don't put Abraham into that position because that girl wants me too. I believe it'd simply corrupt what good he could do as a leader.

Totally predicted that kiss between Andrea and Rick. The page when Rick first started talking to Andrea I decided I'd ask about the future between them, as I'd been thinking about the two as a couple since Lori died. I hope this doesn't mean she is going to die, because that'd be pretty cruel. Everyone who is romantically involved with Rick dies off.

Sincerely,
Grayson

Well, maybe snogging isn't... the kiss of the death (ugh, even I recognize that was bad). Perhaps Rick and Andrea can be make-out buddies.

As we've seen in the past two issues, they kissed, but they're not exactly snogging on the reg just yet.

Dear Robert,

Ok, first a little story. About a year ago I heard about this awesome sounding zombie show that was coming to AMC, being generally interested in zombie movies I figured I would give it a shot. And it blew me away. I was on the edge of my seat every Sunday. I started telling everyone I knew about it. Eventually someone told me that it was based on a comic book. I've never been a comic book reader, but when I found out I could get the Comixology app and read it for free it was an easy decision to make. I have been addicted since that day. I have finally caught up and bought my first new release (#90) 2 minutes after the comic book store opened on Wednesday. And I will be there at the same time every release date.

Now, onto the ass-kissing. TWD is one of the greatest things I've ever read. You sir, are a genius. I have more of an emotional attachment for these characters than I thought possible. I don't know what else to say that hasn't been said hundreds of times before so I'll just say thank you. Thank you for revitalizing my love of reading. Thank you for making me see comics as valuable entertainment. Thank you for all the wonderful stories you've given me. And thank you for all the ones you still have to tell.

Now that that's out of the way its time for some questions. In list format!!!!

1. Did all the shit you took for being "racist" in the beginning of the series influence the T-Dog/Daryl relationship?

Robert?

No, all the shit I took in the beginning for being "racist" influenced me to roll my eyes and keep writing what I was writing. Thankfully, that eventually went away. The majority

of the T-Dog/Merle/Daryl racism stuff in the show was from Frank Darabont.

2. Why haven't you killed off Shane in the show (yet)? It was a defining moment for me when I first read it. And it's kinda weird seeing him interact with characters he never met, is it weird for you too?

Shane's alive because Robert has the luxury to keep him alive. When the comic book started, he wasn't sure if he would be cancelled early on, so he barreled through that storyline.

I think Robert loves having Shane interact with characters like Otis and Maggie... right, RK?

Jon Bernthal is amazing as Shane. I shouldn't really have to say more than that. But really... it's just a matter of having cool things to do with the character. I think when you see all of season 2 and beyond you'll realize why we're keeping him around. Shane's character adds a lot to the overall story.

3. Would you ever consider a table top TWD game? I'm thinking more Vampires: The Masquerade than D&D.

Mayhams... we have the phenomenal Walking Dead board game by ZMan games to keep us satiated.

I'm a sell-out. I'd be interested in anything that generates money so that my children can go to college only to end up being rich assholes that don't contribute to society.

All joking aside, I would love to have a table top role-playing game, because I used to enjoy playing those... and these vintage Garbage Pail Kids won't buy themselves!

4. Whenever TWD is over (hopefully decades from now) would you consider releasing your notebooks with unused plots and character ideas? I think that when it's done (again, hopefully decades) it would be fun to see where things could have gone.

Check upcoming solicitations!

Yeah, we're totally doing that: a hardcover of my plot breakdowns. There's a lot of stuff in there that didn't make it into the book, like Lori was originally supposed to get stabbed by Thomas in the prison and it was going to kill the baby! What?! I'd totally forgotten about that. You don't remember Thomas? Well... then you REALLY need to buy THE WALKING DEAD: CUTTING ROOM FLOOR HC that will be in stores in MARCH.

Well its 7:55 pm on Sunday night and that means it's almost time for The Walking Dead on AMC.

Thanks for everything, Jason Winchell

P.S. Tell Charlie, Cliff, and Rus that they are awesome too.

I tell them every day.

I've never told them.

P.S.S. I hope the shameless AMC and Comixology plugs made your job easier and got you to print my letter, Sina. (And you thought I forgot about you.)

Eh, nothing shameless. Next time, try and throw a little somethin' somethin' to Abrams, Telltale, McFarlane Toys, and St. Martin's Press, kthx.

Ok, so you guys haven't lost me!

The true tension I said was gone in the book returned with troublemaker Nicholas and his face-off with Rick and crew!

I blamed the lack of tension in the book on the TV show---a statement that I now retract. Season 2 of the TV show has been kicking ass, and I'm sure it's only going to get better.

I realize the show and book are separate animals, and I also realize there will be quiet periods in the book.

So, keep up the good work Robert! We might say that we're done with the WD, but we might not be 100% done. By-the-way Robert, I think I'll skip Image's new series that you recommended. I don't think it would be my cup of tea. I think I'll just buy what I like. :-)

Chris
-Ramona, CA

If we can sway your opinion on this book, I'm sure we can convince you to pick up a few other excellent Image series! Next month, I'll try and sell you on Thief of Thieves.

And this month we're pushing FATALE by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips. Here at Walking Dead Central, we'd like for all of you to be buying more comics. Oh, and you're all watching HELL ON WHEELS, right? It airs after Walking Dead at 10pm est on AMC. It's GREAT!

Hallo mister.

Okay, I'll get right to it then. I know the TV show very briefly addressed this but as far as I can remember there have never been any junkies in TWD, the comic. Why not? I mean, I realize the hazard of altering one's mind and perception in such a constantly dangerous world, but it seems people would still take that risk if it lets them escape for just a little while. Give us a junkie in the community to spice things up, because you seem to be hell bent on keeping their little town super zombie-proof so unless you bring a natural disaster,

a deranged gang of marauders and/or crazed army remnants into the picture we'll need something spicier than Rick and Andrea smooching. I think I'm not the only one who's worried this will turn into zombie Melrose Place.

And finally, and be honest now, do you ever mind sharing the credit with Sina? Because I noticed many letters congratulate you both equally for the success of the comic, and maybe I'm wrong here and if so please correct me, but, aren't you, Kirkman, and Charlie Adlard really the two main people to thank for this comic being the way it is? I only say this because I noticed less and less shout outs for Charlie in this letter forum, and there should be at least one in every issue, come people! The great artwork is half the reason you read this series.

People dole out a lot of love to Robert and Charlie, it's just hard to print those letters and not end them with "Thanks, bub." What I do in comparison to everyone else on the book is truly a fraction, but Charlie's too busy making the best book possible to do the letters column with Robert.

Everyone knows Sina doesn't do a damn thing... he basically sits around writing love poems to Brian Bockrath all day. In regards to your junkie question, I imagine most of those people would have been eaten pretty quickly. So I doubt we'll see too many people strung out in the pages... unless we get around to working Brian Bockrath into the actual story.

And I don't mean to cock a snook at you Sina I'm sure you work hard and deserve all the thanks you get. But then shouldn't we thank Cliff Rathburn and Rus Wooton as well? Nobody hardly ever thanks them. Hehe

They do deserve a round of applause! While it's past Thanksgiving in your time, we're just approaching it here, and I will say that we are all thankful to have some amazing, hard working guys in the industry!

(Also, they both just got some props in a recent issue of Invincible, so don't worry, they get letter col love)

Yeah, yeah, yeah... everyone deserves thanks. I'm sorry to gloss over that but did you just say "cock a snook?" What the hell is that? Is that something people say? Am I old? Help?

Best of luck to you all
John the Swede

P.S. Don't let Abraham be snake-tongued by Holly, that would just be too lame, lamer than having Carl shot in the eye! Stupid Hollywood horror movie schlock-tactics. (Yeah, another Carl-was-shot-in-the-eye-remark, you're dreaming if you think you'll ever hear the end of that one. People will come up to you when you're 80 and tell you to go fuck yourself because you had Carl shot. But I don't mind, I'm not that invested in the kid, just thought it was pretty cheap. That's all.

People are now coming to conventions and making Robert sign the open gap on that double page spread where Carl's eye used to be. Pretty awesome.

It's true! Soon they'll be having me sign the double page spread where Abraham was snake-tongued!

Dear KirkSina,

Ok. So Rick and Andrea may be an item. Cool. I was happy to see she had taken off "the hat" while they kissed. That thing has to have major Dale funk associated with it. That could have been awkward if she had kept it on. The last thing Rick needs is to shout out "Dale!" while they're making out. The explanation would have been worse than the action. "Sorry, baby. You smell like Dale." Of course, I'm taking it for granted Andrea has never washed the hat, but I don't think it's much of a stretch to think that through all the apocalyptic shit they've gone through she could find the time to wash a freaking hat.

Andrea's list of things to do today:

1. Clean & oil rifle
2. Find Food
3. Stay alive & protect group
4. Wash Dale's Hat

I just don't see it.

One last thing. What's with Holly feeding that line of crap to Abraham about him being a better leader than Rick?! During sex?! I bet Rosalita never discussed the power hierarchy during intimate moments. Is that really why Abraham dumped her? Because of her pillow talk? Man. He's harsh.

Rob Shelor
Roanoke

That was a pretty foul letter. It deserved printing.

I disagree.

Okay, I'm outee. Enjoy the preview of Ed's new book, write in your thoughts about recent issues and the mid-season finale. We'll see you in 2012.

Oh, and: HAPPY HOLIDAZE!

-Sina Grace

Hey! We got 12 issues out this year... all while I was writing on the second season of the show! Yay us! Big thanks go out to Charlie, Cliff, Rus and whoever else works on this book. I can't keep track any more.

-Robert Hollywood

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Happy New Year, Roamers!

Your faithful Editor here, just as intrigued as you are by the current goings-on in The Walking Dead universe. We have much to cover, including a preview of *Thief of Thieves* – a new book by Robert and some other awesome dudes: Nick Spencer and Shawn Martinbrough – so I'll keep it short.

Letters time!

Yo Sina, Robert, Fellow Readers should this get printed,

This isn't a fan letter per se, more like a request. I'm a huge fan of Robert Kirkman's work and if it is one thing I know that he does, it is successfully surprise us with unexpected twists. He leaves behind no plot holes...he leaves face holes, as Carl well knows.

<Insert Sina comment on how FaceHoles sounds like a new social network>

Oh come on, I'm not THAT predictable...

HAHAHA! I totally agree....hehe.

Well to end the creepiness, my request is to stop printing spoilers from other sources that Kirkman writes.

<Insert Kirkman or Sina comment on how I should be caught up on everything anyway, because I'm rich apparently>

Am I really THAT predictable? Guess I gotta start spicing things up again, don't I?

This is awesome, I don't even have to reply at all.

I only ask this because I really do love *Invincible* and I'm getting told something about Atom Eve in the new *Walking Dead* letters section. It kinda ruins my desire to go buy the trades (I only buy the hardcover trades because they are more convenient than the soft covers and those worthless monstrosities deemed "Complete Libraries"). I could, of course, read it illegally online, but I prefer to support the creators I love with my wampum.

Worthless monstrosities?! The Complete Library editions are rad! Who dare you insult such an awesome format. Heavy, sure... but the pages are printed at a huge size and they look awesome! Come on, man! Bockrath, get this guy out of here!

When storylines get spoiled for me, it makes me want to spend my paycheck on something from, God forbid, DC!! So please fellas - be polite and don't print sections of letters that you know will spoil storylines. Maybe it's a big storyline, maybe it's not that huge of a storyline. Nevertheless, it ruins my interest and makes me seek out other forms of entertainment of which I know nothing about the upcoming plot.

You're better than that.

Silas

P.S. Yes I know the spoilers are from fans who write to you, but the printing is done by you guys. A tag for SPOILERS or something could be implemented.

Noted. We'll definitely put some kind of spoiler notification on that stuff. Ultimately, I know you don't all make mad Editor scilla, and can't easily afford to read everything Robert puts out. Same goes for the TV show. We have to be incredibly sensitive that season 2 has not aired EVERYwhere yet. Just a lot of the world.

Spoilers... it's tough. I respect these kind of comments because personally I hate being spoiled in any way about anything (I'm looking at you Entertainment Weekly! Who spoiled Game of Thrones for me! And just ran a full page piece of art (by Nathan Fox, which is awesome) that spoils the latest season of Breaking Bad before it's even on DVD!) so I try to be mindful of that... but man oh man is it hard!

We'll try to get better.

Abraham dies next issue.

OOPS!

Dear Sirs...

Okay, I've been reading comics for over 20 years following X-Men to Superman, Batman, Spawn to the Preacher. This episode of *Walking Dead* on AMC got me. Shane is BADASS! (or do I write BADA#1!) The scene between Dale and Shane, what a great actor! Who would think the words "Think it through" could be so threatening! Dale better sleep with one eye wide open! Ya killed Shane in the comic, please don't kill him in the show anytime soon, if so it must be in a blaze of glory! It would be great for Shane to survive and meet the other BADASS in the comic, Michonne! I can just see them stare each other down! (I'm watching Talking Dead as I write this and I gather from the hints that Carl is going to kill Shane! Please don't make it so!!!)

(BTW: I did not deem the gushing above to be spoiler-worthy, OK, you guys!)

Speaking of Michonne, it seemed like Michonne and Carl were pretty close when the group disbanded after the prison breach. It seems a little weird to me that she hasn't really been around during Carl's recovery as support. Also, what's up with Rick & Michonne and the "I hear dead people business." Haven't heard about that in a while. In fact it seems that Rick has been kind of avoiding Michonne since she last asked him about speaking to Lori. (Or am I just imagining that he's avoiding her?) Anyway...you've been good at tying things together so I guess I can just wait and see what's up with that.

Well, Michonne may not be Carl's #1 fan knowing Rick had his son on duty to kill her lover (see: No Way Out). All that being said, there's a lot of time Robert isn't showing in the book... Michonne looking over Carl, or interacting with him is taken as a given unless otherwise pointed out by King Kirk.

We'll see the two interacting again soon enough. I try to only show the interesting parts. There's a lot going on with these characters that we don't see... like them going to the bathroom. We've never shown anyone doing that. Weird, huh?

Since I'm writing I'll give my 2 cents on some topics from Letter Hacks. I like many others thought more of Carl's brains were blown out than apparently actually were...but great story line, especially having Rick being mad at Carl for not missing Lori more. (I kinda felt the same way and am glad it was brought up & Rick finally tells Carl that it's okay to feel and be sad).

Don't really like Rick & Andrea. She was really a dick to old homeboy who liked her (I forgot his name) during that scene on the porch. And Rick just got his last love interest killed. Seems like poor timing to me (But then again, everyday must seem like poor timing since the zombie apocalypse!) Maggie seems like she is about ready to commit suicide again and it seems Abraham is fixing to get himself killed if he lets his current bed buddy talk him into challenging Rick, but maybe you'll surprise me.

I've been surprised. Shawn Kirkham and Chad Manion are acting nonplussed, but I think they too are kind of vibing on what RK is doing with Rickdrea.

We'll see.

As for the slower community building scenes in the comic, they might be slow but they are essential - without them the book would just be about the last days of humanity as the walkers and dwindling supplies of food take the survivors out one by one. The efforts at community building is what actually leaves us guessing to see what will happen, can humanity survive? Besides, there are lots of interesting things that can be explored...as the community expands, who decides on the rules and regulations? Will it continue to be just Rick or some other strong leader (with the potential for the rise of another governor) or will people fight for some sort of democracy to emerge? Who gets to stay safe in the community and who has to continue to go out and risk their lives for supplies and expanding the community walls? Will it evolve into a caste system (for example, Glenn and his offspring will always be runners, Rick and his offspring will always be leaders)? Along those lines, will the comic eventually jump into the future to see what happens or will it always be chronological?

As far as I'm aware, events will remain chronological up to and after the events in coming issues... but Robert's larger plans are secrets only he knows, and he's keeping it that way.

Lastly, I just wanted to thank you for creating a character like Michonne. As a black woman growing up loving comics and sci fi, I've been pretty used to not seeing anyone like me (especially sci fi - it seems most utopias don't include people of color...I don't mind if we're not in the dystopias :)... Anyway a good story is a good story, but is always nice to see yourself reflected in one.

Keep up the good work in the comic and TV show! And if you kill Shane in the show, Rick is going to have to step up with a little more BADASSNESS or maybe Abraham will roll through and take up the slack.

By the way, besides getting me to finally write into a letters page, the *Walking Dead* got me back into a comic book store after a few-years hiatus. (Thought I was too old for comics, guess I was wrong!)

Much love,
Danielle
New Rochelle, NY

We're glad you like Michonne, and appreciate yourself reflected in a dystopia.

Abraham on the show? Aren't you getting ahead of yourself?

Dear Robert,

Actually canned food can be good almost indefinitely as long as a few conditions are met:

1-No Rust
2-No Swelling
3-No dents

Other than that you can get 5 years or more out of canned food. Expiration dates are mandated by law and do not really conform to reality.

Michael Ellis

Let's hope Eugene magically realizes that and tells Rick & co.

My dearest Robert Kirkman (Did I just say that...),

Old Sina would have chimed in and said "don't worry man, I've been there." New Sina makes a note to refer to Robert as "dearest" later in the day.

Anyway, I've been a fan of comics and the show, also reading *Haunt*, *The Infinite* (buying the Deluxe Edition, *Invincible*, *Battle Pope*, etc. I've been surprised that also my parents have been fans of the show, also they enjoy the connection with the characters that feels real. Which gets me to the heart. Also unexpectedly don't know which character is safe from anything, from death or losing a hand or an eye. Which keeps me on the top of my toes

and keep on reading TWD. It's like crack!! Damn, Kirkman, what have you done to me...I'm selling myself!!! Forget that last part. I'm taking notice like others that the 100th issue of TWD coming close. Which brings me to the question...what are you going to have for us in the 100th issue? I know, I know, you won't say yet (SAY IT!!). But I want to bring some ideas to you. Are you going to have some guest artists for the interior art? I know there are to be cover art, but I want to see a big event. Having artists drawing on each of the pages in the issue, but have artist you worked with before. Like having Charlie Adlard (of course), Ryan Ottley (again from issue 75), Cory Walker, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, and the return of Tony Moore. I would like to see you draw again, damn good job you did on Spawn 200. Is the 100th issue of TWD going to have a 100 pages? Is it going to be in color (or a few pages in lb). I know that sounds like a bad idea to see that but I want this issue to be have something that I'm looking forward to... Can you please print this letter in the next issue...pretty please! Keep on doing what you do, Robert, as always!

-Sterling Gazdick

While it's silly to print a letter you know I can't give out the answers to in terms of big plans for issue 100, I can tease out a few things:

The book will not be 100 pages. I would die. The focus will not be utilizing other artists' talents to showcase the event, but rather highlighting the team we've already got -- so, there will not be Cory Walker or Tony Moore art. While I too would like to see Robert draw again, I think the only time we're going to see that in print in 2012 is in THE WALKING DEAD: CUTTING ROOM FLOOR HC, out this March. Along with his handwritten notes for the book, there will be a few doodles strewn about.

Was that vague enough for you?

P.S. WHERE ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO DO IMAGE UNITED AGAIN?!

It's being drawn right now! Just... y'know... slowly.

TWD,

Robert, after what you did to Carl I suspect you're a Snake Plissken Fan! Jeez, Dead Inside really?!? Yeahs!

Haven't you done enough to that kid? By the time you're done he'll be a paraplegic!

I suspect Issue 100 to be a heavy hitter. It seems a bit slow at the moment, but that's how you are. Quiet, for several issues then BAM! All hell, breaks loose.

We call that quiet/riot here in the office.

I suspect that the new "Stranger" at the end of TWD #91 is a familiar character and that will become an "Anti-Rick" so to speak. Even Rick needs a "Lex Luthor". Just don't get all chummy with this one. I like the drama among the undead.

You think Jesus is a foil?

Heard several fans have given you "Fan Art" will you ever post any?

Fan art does sprout out from time to time. Sadly, we try to get as many letters printed as possible, so we encourage fans to share their masterpieces on DeviantArt or similar websites. Plus, the drawings just really aren't that good.

I tease!

Well, some of them... I made a rule early on in this series to not ever run fan art because I figured I'd just get old drawings of zombies that people did. I'm sticking to my guns!

Kudos, on AMC. Knew it would be a hit. Suspect our "One hand racist" from the roof will be the Governor. I dare you to prove me wrong.

Who? What? How is Merle supposed to be the Governor if Danny Trejo is supposed to be the Governor? Which internet rumor is true?

Nice.

And please, no spin-offs. I'm sure you'll have enough income to support the children of your Children.

Happy New Year and keep "Walking".

Jeff Cromer
Southport, NC

No Walking Dead spin-offs, we promise. The novels are enough to keep the kids in college for a few semesters.

Heh... yeah. I think spin-offs weaken the overall brand, unless it's something like a superhero comic where there's a huge enough cast of characters and an interesting enough world to maintain a spin-off.

1st time writing into a comic book after a lifetime of reading them and damn am I pissed right now. But before that....Thank you so much for getting me back into comic books. I stopped collecting in the mid 90's when some of the Marvel time-travel stories started to hurt my braaaaains. Then a few years ago I got a random itch to check out the local comic shop and found the 1st collection of The Walking Dead. After being completely hooked I went back and picked up the rest of the collections. Not satisfied, I had to track down every issue I could find. After spending more \$ than I'd like to admit, my collection is almost done and up to date. Because of The Walking Dead, I've now been reading way more comics than I ever did as a kid. You've ignited a passion I haven't had in years and my comic budget is way out of control. But no matter what I started to read, The Walking Dead has always been number 1 on the list because of its story. When I heard it was becoming a TV show I was the happiest maniac on the planet. I was slightly worried that it would be changed too much and not feel like TWD. But all those fears were put to rest by the time we got to the iconic campfire attack scene. I'm sure that was a scene many fans were waiting for- including myself. I loved the things that were added such as the vatos and CDC storylines. You nailed it with the 1st season. Perfect.

[SEASON TWO, PART ONE SPOILERS AHEAD]

Now here's where you need a double-tap to the sack. I understand some characters don't have a place and had to be left behind...Allen and family, some of Hershel's family. But stop changing things so damn much. Remember what got you to TV in the 1st place. It was YOUR story. Not the current story being told. Why are the people in charge of the TV show trying their hardest to kill it and this comic off? It went from being perfect to being pissed on and beaten unrecognizable. Every week that goes by on TV something new happens that slowly kills the solid foundation you've already set down. Your very faithful readers DON'T want to be surprised...they want The Walking Dead, as it is. I think everything really started to fall apart with the death of Otis. In the book, his death was pretty much one frame but it stuck with me more than anyone else's. It shocked me because I liked the back-story with him and Patricia. Then bam...is that Otis's zombieified corpse...oh daaaaaaaaaaaaamn. Now I know that will never happen in the TV show. Instead his death is used to push a character- who should already be dead- farther to the dark side. Taking away Hershel's twins destroys great story telling for the future...soooo we got that not to look forward to.

While I understand that you want things to be true to the comic, does it change your opinion of things that Robert was in the writers' room every day with the staff, building out the arc of the season with a group of people who only have respect for the source material? I may not be able to change how you're not happy with the changes made, but at least know that Robert was there to make them.

I promise anything changed that you may be unhappy with will lead to things you dig in the show. Talk to me when season 2 is over, basically. We're only a little past the half way point right now. I stand by what we're doing and I'm very proud of the show. If you like how things went in the comic... read the comic. This is a different story with different twists, different turns, and y'know... different characters (Daryl Dixon FTW! What? What?!), so it's not going to follow the same track, but I promise you, it'll make for a better viewing experience if you don't know exactly what happens next. Trust me!

But the thing that made me tap out and say Robert Kirkman I am completely done reading any of your comics for a while or watching your train wreck of a TV show happened tonight. Your strongest and best written character was taken and turned her into a cheap stupid whore. Everything that had made Andrea who she was, was taken away and raped. What your characters do on TV translates directly to the pages you write. So I guess anybody can just fuck Andrea? For me now, the amazing connection and relationship between her and Dale has been turned into just some dumb slut who'll do any asshole. It means less than nothing now....as does this newly formed thing with her and Rick. She went from favorite character in book to least favorite in TV show, which translates immediately to least favorite in the book now also. I don't look at the TV show and the comic as separate entities. They are one in the same. Changing YOUR story will not keep it on TV. Nobody cares how many weeks Carl can lay there or how long Sophia can stay lost for. It's all wasted time in the place of your own great storytelling. Get on with it already. Everyone I know who reads the book has almost had it with the TV show because it's not The Walking Dead anymore. Just a really slow and boring drawn out version of it. It's been a season of poor writing decisions that will make sure this show never stands the test of time like the other shows on AMC will. There was only one shot to get The Walking Dead as faithfully translated to screen as possible and it's being wasted.

I'm sorry, but I'll only respond to this criticism if you can prove to me you WOULDNT have sex with Jon Bernthal were the opportunity to arise. I mean, that doesn't make Andrea a slut... that makes her HUMAN.

Amiright?!

Truer words, Robert. Truer words.

For me though, my time with The Walking Dead has come to an end. I never thought the TV version of anything could kill the original for me...but it has. I can't look at these characters in this book the same way again. You can tell me to stick it out a little longer for the great things in store, but I don't buy that line anymore man. I don't care about the comic storyline because for me a big part of that was Rick and Andrea finally getting together after the loss of Lori and Dale. But I can't enjoy that because as soon as they get going in the book it gets ruined by the fact that Shane was with her 1st in the show. I don't care about the future of the show storyline because I know characters like Michonne and Governor will never live up to expectations. Just changed, dumbed down versions. I won't be tuning into the season finale and can't see myself wanting to follow the book anymore. I'm sorry for leaving your book as it's something I've enjoyed more than anything else the past few years. But I really can't stick around anymore and find out more bad story changes. So when does T-dog say his name is Tyreese? Give me a damn break. Can't wait to hear that from my friends who stop watching the show after that episode.

Aw, come on, man. That's all a little harsh, but whatever. You're projecting quite a bit and wrong on all counts, but that's cool. If you can't see the show and comic as separate things, that's your thing. Don't read the book if you don't want to, but your reasons are... unreasonable? I don't know.

You're not going to read this anyway, why am I replying?

Why are we printing this? SINA?!

C'mon, they always come back!

I try to avoid the world as a whole and would never write to anything for any reason but I just had to get this out. I've never been this mad and disappointed in someone else's creative work before and I shouldn't get this worked up. But these characters do mean a lot to me and to see them changed so harshly is heartbreaking and I can't be here for it. I might have to give the comic a few months until the bad taste of season 2 is gone and then maybe I can buy it again. But there will be no season 3 for me until someone else watches it and tells me that it is The Walking Dead, as it is.

Thank you for your time
TJ Richter

Any response would be greatly appreciated. In print or not. I just want to feel like someone is listening for once.

We're listening. There's not much I can say to help you with your frustration. Even in season one, the show was meant to use the comic as a launching pad for stories, but explore themes and characters differently in a way that keeps things fun and fresh for fans, and also suits television.

I know you're bummed that some characters just haven't made it to the screen yet (T-Dog and Tyreese are two different characters, I assure you). There are a slew of reasons why these changes are made, but generally it's hard to follow 30+ actors and give them all storylines worth watching. They would get one line each!

We don't want to lose you as a fan of the show or the comic, but I don't know if at this point you can be swayed.

Yeah, don't get me wrong, we'd certainly prefer you keep reading. But if you're not digging it, you're just not digging it.

OH MY GOD I was reading the hacks and this 1 dude wrote in if u could make me a zombie in the comics about how man that would be cool. I mean I cough I have medium long hair almost 14 braids kinda lat Hispanic not if that matters but u know it would be a pretty awesome character but u know don't want 2 get selfish. THANKS and as always do what u do I have written in lots so I will like flip out crazy if at least 1 gets in2 ur comics.

Love catlin or CayCay (whichever)

Btw I'm spreading the loving of the walking dead infection all around Wyoming

CayCay, you're in the next issue. Sadly, we didn't get the braces down because of the whole rotting/broken teeth thing. It's for the better, could you imagine getting all of that flesh out of your braces?

That's all I've got for now. Please do pick up Thief of Thieves. It's such a gorgeous and fantastic book.

And check back with AMC in February for the return of The Walking Dead!!! The second half of the season makes everything to date look like child's play.

-Sina Grace

THIEF OF THIEVES!! CHECK IT OUT! It's gonna be sweet! I'm having a blast working on this new series, so please... give it a look.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Happy Leap Year!

Your Editor Sina Grace here, with oodles of Walking Dead news that I sadly cannot share yet. At this point you've all seen our teasers for the next story arc: **SOMETHING TO FEAR**. Pretty awesome stuff.

And if you haven't, be sure to look online for them over at skybound.com! (Robert in italics) Or if you don't want to be spoiled, just wait.

We're finalizing all sorts of press for the Telltale video game, available this Spring! Every month is going to bring something incredible from Skybound HQ.

Letters! Letters!! Letters!!!

Hi Robert, Hi Sina,

I'm a long-term reader of Walking Dead, I jumped on at issue 25, bought the first two trades, and I'm even enough of a geek that I bought TWD Weekly 1-24, just to complete my collection of Letter Hacks. This book has been a constant in my life for some time - I think it's the finest piece of zombie fiction ever made, up there with World War Z and Dawn of the Dead. I recommend it to everyone with even a passing interest in zombie lore. I've laughed, cried and jumped with fright because of this comic - no-one else's fiction provokes such a strong reaction from me. This is the first time I've written in, and I just wanted to say all that, and to thank Kirkman, Charlie, Cliff, Sina and the rest of the team for so many hours of entertainment. I even wrote about the comic for my postgraduate thesis!

Nerd!

I also wanted to weigh in on the last few arcs of the story. Fuck the haters, man. The pacing is part of the charm for me, and when I read the last issue I got very excited that the whole thing was about to kick up a gear once more. I'll follow this comic until the bitter end, through the moments of beautiful characterization and quiet times, like Rick admitting his mistakes to Abraham and Carl, to the moments of high drama, like Tyreese being locked in the gym with a bunch of walkers. The Fear the Hunters arc was a favourite of mine. I'll never get that image of Dale laughing and saying "Tainted meat!" out of my head. Charlie's art is a thing of wonder - for me his are the best splash pages in the industry, because they usually underscore important character points, not action sequences. The effect is devastating. Kirkman, keep killing your darlings! Never let up!

Dead Darlings- that's a good band name.

I really enjoyed series one of the TV show as well although I must admit series two has been a little disappointing. I think you've yet to capture the things that make the comic so great, specifically the cliffhanger endings that nearly every issue hangs on. I know this kind of contradicts my comments about the pacing of the book.... But in the book, there are cliffhangers every issue. It's a shame, because with that structure, you'd have the best show on TV. The ensemble cast is great, but they're stuck in limbo and have been for several episodes. Kick it up a gear man! I'm glad you haven't killed Shane, and I get that the book and show are very different beasts, but I know a few folk who've dropped the show because it's too slow.

By the time you read this, you'll be about two to three weeks into wishing you'd take your words back!

So true! The last six episodes of this season... are kind of amazing, if I do say so myself. So I can't wait to hear back from everyone once you've all seen what I've seen.

Another problem I have with the show is the foregrounding of religion and faith. There's a lot of praying. For a British viewer (we have a much more secular culture here) this focus is tedious. I'm watching the show with my girlfriend, who hasn't read the comics. I told her, "There's a lot less Jesus in the books...." Then in issue 92, you have a character turn up claiming that folks call him Jesus! That made me ROFL. Anyway, I trust you not to make the comic into a prayerfest. And I realize your test audience is probably very much majority Christian.... It's just a shame you have to play to them. It makes the characters feel less real, for me. Anyway, the possibility of a network of communities, trading and maybe even warring, in the book is hugely exciting. Can't wait to see where you guys take us next.

That's kind of the major religion in the south...

Religion won't be a central theme of the series forever. It just felt odd to ignore due to the region where the story is set. We dealt with it a little in the comic from time to time.

I'll sign off now. Keep making important, moving, honest, awesome comics! You guys are the best team in the business.

Peace
Bram E. Gieben

Don't worry about this book getting preachy ever. Robert's not that kind of guy, or that kind of writer. But names do bear significance...

Robert,

First the preamble: I've been here quietly reading every word of story and the letter columns since issue #1. NOT the trades or the compilations - the comics. Eight years, following the journey. It's slow moving and dynamic, like a great musical piece. I've enjoyed it very much. Thank you, Robert.

Having said that, I want to get something off my chest. This has bugged me for a while. Waaaay back years ago, readers were writing in to ask you to do a character map, or legend so to speak. You and Charlie provided it (for a few issues, I think?), but it got me to stop and ask "why"? To this day, I come to the same answer. Many of us readers are not hearing each character's unique voice. It's obvious that this comic is not about the zombies as much as it is about the characters. But almost ALL of these characters are interchangeable vocally! Certainly not Rick. You have put his voice solidly in my head, barking out orders and generally being stoic for the group, but he's a bit of a personal wreck when he's alone. I hear that, I GOT him, he's a standout. Two more standouts SHOULD have been Abraham and Michonne. But you could take almost any word balloon from any recent issue and Charlie could draw a different minor character underneath, and it would work fine. Well, that's not quite true, but my point is that you shouldn't have to SEE who's speaking to KNOW who's speaking. That may not be true for minor characters, but I've seen the introduction of so many of your characters (which I've erroneously deemed to be minor characters simply because they speak in vanilla) that continue to stick around and stick around until they become major characters. Like union seniority. From the way Abraham looks and acts, I NEVER would have believed he would say "Oh, stop it", like some kind of prissy-boy. But there he is in issue #91 with that very word balloon pointing to his ear. It takes me out of the story and makes me hyper-aware that all of these characters are written by one man. On page 5 of issue #91, Rick is having a meeting with his trusted group and begins what I thought was a monologue. Upon reaching panels 3 and 4, I had to look to see which way the word balloon pointed to see who was continuing the speech, Rick or Abraham. This happens to me a lot. Am I the only one? I LIKED the way Axel said "You follow me?" after every sentence. It was annoying, but in a MEMORABLE way! (That WAS Axel who said that, wasn't it? Crap...shooting myself in the foot here...)

Character differentiation CAN be done solely through speech. I'm giving away my age here, but let me show as Exhibit A: Stan Lee's run on the Fantastic Four. From issue #10 (to give the characters time to develop a voice), through the end of Stan's run, each member of the F.F. was immediately recognizable by just their voice. You could go back and dictate to me any word balloon from any of the major four characters, and I'll tell you who it was. Something like this:

Character 1 - "Undoubtedly, there is a negative fission rift in the ultrasonic cohesion zone. Astounding!"

Character 2 - "Sounds like fun! Which way to the party?"

Character 3 - "Just gimme somethin' to hit!"

Character 4 - "Be careful, boys!"

You know exactly who said each line. Certainly Stan was writing for a younger audience than you, and he could get pretty hammy, but his characters' voices are imprinted in my memory forever, almost like they were there all along. I realize you are going for a degree of realism in your work with the Walking Dead, so Exhibit A may not apply. I now present Exhibit B: Garth Ennis. After reading Ennis for years, I am convinced of two things - 1. His MAJOR characters ooze character in their voices, and 2. He is certifiably insane. He may cheat a little by using accents, but it's WHAT they say that meshes perfectly with the accent and the character.

I've thought about this a lot. I thought "Well, I'm a Tarantino dialogue kind of guy, and The Walking Dead is a zombie soap opera". It's almost like you are afraid to write a true unique character for fear of him/her being a caricature. The last thing I would want is for you to suddenly start writing "The Walking Dead" to sound like "Reservoir Dogs". But you are really staying low-key with the characterizations here. Sure, you have the stoic but flawed and self-doubting leader in Rick. He's been fleshed out, and his voice rings true. But when it comes to future character voices, maybe someone should use slang too much. Maybe someone is the high-society type that feels they don't belong in this world. Someone else should be the wise-ass. Someone else should use humor to deal with apocalypse. And yes, someone should be the Tarantino loose cannon.

Then have zombies eat them.

David Crisp

This is an interesting letter, and one that I'll let Robert tackle...

I feel like, at times the character have very distinct voices and there have been characters like Abraham and Axel that have had extremely distinct ways of speaking. For my money, it would be weird if this book had a young party boy, a stuffy scientist, and rough and tough guy and a housewife from the '50s in it. Our characters just aren't that distinct. When they are, they are... but most of the time they aren't. I feel like THAT would be unrealistic.

Not trying to blow you off... I'm not perfect... go back and read the whole series. I used to write Rick a LOT more southern than I do these days. That's a big mistake on my part—and it's just one of those things that happen over the course of writing 100 issues of something. I will continue to do my best, though... that's my promise to you. I'll try to introduce more characters who end every sentence with "you follow me?" I miss that guy.

The religion you preach is *life*; took me a while to notice.

Sincerely,
Will Peterson

How's THAT for prayer-fest?

Amen.

Dear Robert and Sina,

I have been an avid reader of the walking dead for a few months now, since I saw series one, then my friend James lent me all 90 of the comics, (praise to him!) to get me up to speed.

Your comics have astounded me throughout the months I have been reading them and letter hacks has been making me laugh!

Why is everyone so concerned with the lack of action in the latest issues? I mean fair enough they are a little dull, but if you look back on the 80's, there was mad fighting every issue! Respect to that! You need some calm before the storm, which I think/hope will be coming in issue 100. Kirkman you need something big there! Need it! Don't let me down!

They're never happy. Hopefully the gnarly looking teasers for SOMETHING TO FEAR will quell any fears that this book has gone soft.

Moving on to the subject of Carl, I mean if he lives he lives, but I sort of want him to die, because we all know if he goes, we will know nobody is safe. To be honest, Andrea is a sick character, but she needs to pull herself together, Rick is too beast to go out with her!

Is that a proper way to dump someone? "I'm too beast for you, sorry." Is there like a Beast chart? Is Rick a 9?

"Girl, I really like you... but you're just too Beauty." That's how I'm living the rest of my life—everyone is either a Beauty or a Beast. Wasn't Chip adorable?

And why is season 2 only coming back in February? Did you guys not fancy a zombie Christmas?

Would you have watched? No! TV law shows that winter is a dead time for TV, that's why all shows come back in January. For the show, it made more sense to wait 'til the Super Bowl was done, given the Sunday airtime.

If you print this, muchos respect to you guys!!!!
Sean Boyle, St.Albans

We had your respect anyway!

Hey Robert,

This is the first time I've written to a letter column in my life. I want to tell you how you've impacted my 13 year old son's life. He is obsessed with everything Walking Dead, the series theme music is his ring tone. It all started when he found out about the AMC series that was coming to TV. At first I was a little concerned how this show would corrupt his impressionable little mind. I told him the only way I was going to let him watch it was if he read the entire comic book series. I figured it was better to get corrupted by reading it first, at least it's earned and he'd be invested in the characters. I gave him Book One... yes I have all the compiled books as well as the individual comics... been a Big fan from the start. He burned through that book, and then through all the books. Soon he was all caught up... almost. I've been giving him the last few issues when he does something that warrants a reward. I think it's a major reason he's getting straight A's. I can't wait to see his face when he reads about what happens to Carl, he's going to crap. Hell, I need him to read it so I can talk to someone about it. So now we read the comics and watch the series together... great bonding father and son time (we don't let his mom watch with us 'cause she squirms and screams too much). So a big thank you and congrats on all your success. This is the best comic ever and we can't get enough.

This is what Robert set out to do almost ten years ago: bring families together with his ongoing tale of survival horror!

Honestly, great story. Strange logic- if you're going to corrupt your son, it may as well be by way of comics? I can get behind that.

Ps. I'm trying to get him to read *Invincible*, but the first thing he asked me was if there were any zombies in it. It's going to take some time but I'll get him hooked on it too.

Brian (& Van)

There are zombies in *Invincible*. I'm not lying. There are tons more superheroes and epic fights, but there is an undead presence in the book during a pivotal story arc.

*Well... there's not THAT many zombies in *Invincible*... oh, wait—we're trying to get him to buy it? There are tons of zombies in that book!*

Dear Robert, Charlie, Cliff, Sina, and even Rus,

When I read issue 91 I felt that same suspense I felt at the end of issue 61 when you showed us two of the Hunters. New survivors! I was so surprised by that. Now that I know his name is Paul or "Jesus" and I saw him in action, the fear of him being bad is sort of gone. Can you keep him good? He seems like he is gonna be an important part of the story. Now for some

questions

What are you planning for issue 100? A death? More walkers? A giant battle (like the prison)? A new revelation? I need to know!!

Who knows what we have in store for issue 100?!

I know... I know! It's going to be awesome.

Is Jesus related to Douglas Monroe? Or is he part of a community made by Davidson. Douglas said he just exiled him, not killed him, right. And Douglas said he killed TWO men. He believes he killed Davidson, who is the other man?

Interesting notion.

Why did the search for Sophia in season 2 go on so long?

Watch the season again in one go. That search was practically a week in their time, but it came off like two months because you're watching it week-to-week.

Did almost every problem in season 2 begin when Shane killed Otis? If Otis wasn't killed by Shane, he could've told everyone that he put Sophia in the barn.

Debatable.

Why doesn't Hershel have many kids in the t.v show? Where is Billy, Arnold, Susie, or Rachel? I remember Maggie telling Glenn that Her mom, Shawn, and Lacey are in there already.

-Brian Creed

It's both expensive and not as fun to watch that amount of characters on TV as opposed to seeing them in a comic. A larger cast doesn't really translate well on air, plus; you also have to pay those actors a decent wage, right?

There's a limit to what we can do per episode and while it's fine to have people sitting in the background of a comic for issue after issue... it's just not feasible to do that with a TV show.

To R. Kirkman, Sina and to whom among the undead that may be concerned,

I just finished reading issue 92, here in the twilight of 2011. It's pretty fun how I still really look forward to each issue, and haven't considered a single one a dud yet. Keep up the good work. Charlie too of course, but I know how you like to withhold praise from him in case he notices the book becomes popular.

He still hasn't gotten the message all the way in the U.K.!

First I'd like to say it's great that winter is upon the group again. I believe the first signs were around issue 79 (great cover!). However, I haven't seen much sign since! I love seeing snow in the art, and hope to see some great covers or even entire outdoor issues depicting it. (Hint, hint) Also, way back when in issue... well you'll have to help me out with this one, but somewhere it was mentioned how the walkers slow down in cooler weather (blood freezes quicker or some such). Will you be exploring more "facts of the undead"? In particular with the colder weather, but it seems like it's been a while since it was teased that we would learn more about them (herd mentality, smell and such).

I don't think we have plans to do any kind of sourcebook or tell-all on how the undead works in the book... it's organic as to what the characters understand as the series progresses.

Secondly, I am looking forward to the cutting room floor material you are putting out in 2012. Back a ways you mentioned in the letters column that you had a different path in mind for Abraham, and that you might reveal it at some point in the future. When I wrote you later asking about such a reveal, you explained that it was darker and shorter lived, but you would rather keep the details secret in hopes recycling it somehow in the future of the series for a new or different character. I was just curious if you are cutting things from the cutting room floor material with such hopes, or if it will be a complete accounting of your notes.

The Walking Dead: The Cutting Room Floor hardcover will be a detailed accounting of Robert's notes from the inception of each issue, with an explanation as to how each issue evolves from that point.

We've gone so far to scan the original note pages for each issue, and aside from random phone numbers, we've left everything for you to savor!

Thirdly: Chainsaw.

Walking Dead 97 cover.

Finally, again back a ways; you mentioned that if you were to do something special for an anniversary in this series (double size issue? hologram cover? something else?) it would be for issue 100. Any hints?

Keep your eyes peeled! What I'd give for a chromium cover!

Looking forward to seeing a certain sword wielder in the TV show. And just more show! If only this was Walking Dead Weekly.

Your buddy through brains and bile,

Brent in Mpls.

What sword wielder?

Okay, we've got to go. There's a lot of work Robert has to do leading up to Walking Dead 100.

Also, are you watching the second half of season 2? Holy moly!!!

-Sina Grace

Enjoy! I'll see you all back here in a month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, Walkers!

This is Sina Grace here (with Robert due to drop by any moment in italics). I need to start with two newsworthy items:

First thing: Our e-mail has changed. Send all correspondence to: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Brian Bockrath kept sending us spam, so I needed to change the account.

BOCKRATH!!!!

Second thing: big thank-you to everyone who came out in support of Image Comics Expo. It was great to meet a lot of you (lookin' at you Doug Hurley, Mike Exner, Nate Costa). It was fantastic to see some of you sitting in the middle of the convention floor reading our exclusive edition of issue 94... never mind the fact that you were blocking traffic!

Okay. I'll shut up. Letters!

Well, first I want to also thank everyone for making Image Comics Expo a HUGE success. It was a great time had by all and that's due in large part to the fact that people showed up, and a lot of them, too! So thanks!

Norman and Steven want to apologize again for the fart bombs.

Hi Rob and Sina,

I just finished issue 92, and it was pretty stellar. I'm looking forward to see where the Jesus plot line goes, and suspect that 2012 will be an interesting year for TWD fans.

I'm writing in hopes that I'll get a response in regards to the show, not the comic, since I can't find any criticisms whatsoever with the comic. In my mind, the show seemed to be an alternate reality to the comic. Any differences between the show and the comic where the result of characters making different choices early on leading to a different outcome. This would explain why there Shane continues to live, Daryl's presence, Tyreese's absence etc. However there was one discrepancy that did not fit into this theory. When the survivors were walking the highway in the early episodes of season two it occurred to me that there were a huge number of non-zombie corpses occupying the abandoned vehicles. It seems that if the show was following the established TWD rule that everyone is already infected and are doomed to become zombies regardless of how they die (not counting headshots) then there would be far less actual corpses in the vehicles and more zombies. I'm hoping I'm mistaken and the show will establish the same rule simply because I believe that this rule is a subtle but important difference in your work compared to the typical zombie fiction. It gives a deeper meaning to the title the walking dead, and is a reflection of the despair of the world that the characters have found themselves.

I think this is clarified a bit by the time you're reading the letters column...

At the time this sees print, the finale will have aired and it has been proven that anyone who dies for any reason will become a zombie. For that reason, any non zombie corpses you saw on the highway, either suffered severe brain trauma in a car crash that resulted in that pileup, or had another brain damaging event that killed them. They could have even been zombies in the car for a while—until someone came along and killed them. We were well aware of the coming reveal when we wrote those scenes early in the season.

In addition, I wanted to say that I hope that Comic Andrea does not become Zombie Chow now that she is flirting with disaster in the form of Rick. I know it's been said before, but that guy is poison to any ladies that fall for him. Andrea seems like the strongest character, and has become such a bad ass that I would hate to see her go.

She seems to think she's sticking around, and that she'll be able to break the rule. Also, I think it takes going All The Way to be applicable to Rick's curse.

Uh-oh!

Before I finish I just wanted to share a thought that occurred to me while reading the latest issue. Jesus (named after the most famous zombie) made his debut in this issue, leading me to think of the possibility of that he represents a group of zombies who managed to change back (resurrect?) into near humans on their own, but have to deal with Rick's group slaughtering them left and right in an I Am Legend sort of way. I'm not saying that this is a good idea, but it's quirky and maybe worth sharing.

Cheers,

Jeph Morton
Edmonton AB Canada

Well, as of this issue, we've proven your Jesus idea silly and wrong, which leads me to a larger point: Canadians are silly.

Utterly kidding! At least you admit your idea (much like your people) is quirky.

Dear Kirkman (and Sina)

I'll skip the praise, because you get plenty and I would never write fan mail to a comic I did not enjoy. A lot.

Tradition bids numbered questions/comments so here goes.

1) The whole Carl-shot-through-the-eye-debate. I freely admit – when I turned that page it was like a kick to the groin. Total chock, which is no mean feat for a comic. I can understand people getting upset at blowing him away, but such is the way of life in the zombie apocalypse. You can't play favourites and keep the tension. One of the incredible things about The Walking Dead is the extremely harsh way you treat characters we care about. You just never know who end up eaten alive next, but unlike other zombie-stories we actually care about this. It is no easy task to make the readers take an interest in characters who are basically walking lunch bags. Well done, Sir.

Sorry, my mind meandered and I thought you said Walking Dead lunch bags... which would be a great addition next to our lunch boxes...

Thanks, and... lunch bags... hmmm.

2) Then there is all the buzz about you killing Rick and putting Carl in charge sometime in the future. Unless the series skips several years, I don't see that idea working out. Carl is a kid. A likeable, but rather psychotic and now-maimed kid. I don't see a ragged team of survivors taking Carl's orders in any believable way. I would advise against it. Of course I am not the author of a worldwide bestselling zombie series with TV-dramatizations etc, so I'm sure you don't need my advice on your work.

Thank you for admitting that. We also know you totally love the idea because I've seen your fanfic on-line.

Actually, do we get Walking Dead fanfic? Is that now a thing? Is there Walking Dead Slash fiction, too?

Yeesh... and yes, of course there is. Also, these aren't questions at all. This is annoying. Why are we printing this letter?

3) Finally, the real reason I had to write, something that is bothering me in the extreme. I have read through the issues without seeing any mentioning of this, and it bugs my mind to no end, so I have to ask. Back in the prison, Rick (and Carl) was traumatized by seeing Lori and the baby being blown away. Rick to the point of hearing Lori on the telephone afterwards. And yet, with all his experience, he seems focused on her death and the shock of losing the baby. There is no mentioning of the fact, that dear Lori is not just shot and killed. She is walking around that prison courtyard as a zombie looking for flesh, doomed to an existence as an undead henceforth. Worse still, baby Judy will be dragging her broken body across that same courtyard possessed by a hunger she cannot understand nor has any chance of living out. Lori might gain a glimmer of happiness from the occasional live meat, but baby Judy has nothing but desperation to look forward to. And this is RICK – he figured this out already and took a three day hike to re-kill a friend who tried to kill him, knowing he would otherwise be trapped in his grave. Why isn't he disintegrating from this knowledge, or have I missed something important that negates this? And if you already plan to do something with this, then for the love of everything, don't print this part of the letter. I HATE reading something revealing about a series, but it has been several years now and there is no sign Rick takes any notice of this? What gives?

I would maybe take Rick's moving onward as a sign of how far he's come since he dug up Shane and killed him. Rick's values have definitely changed, and I would say that the events leading up to and including the raid at the prison basically gave us the Rick we have now. While I'd like to flirt and say there's a chance of revisiting the barren prison, there's a lot going on in this Larger World...

That, and Rick's smart enough to know that with that many zombies around--what's left of Lori and Judy (which isn't much) is going to get eaten to the point that it WON'T come back as a zombie. Those two people got devoured, I'm afraid.

So on that note I wish you the best of fortune and hope The Walking Dead keeps up the tension for the next 100 issues as well. Looking forward to the 100th issue and cross my fingers there will be a 100 issue omnibus out – that would be more than 2000 pages of awesomeness.

Sincerely
Michael Kamp
Denmark

I can't say much about a 100 issue omnibus, but I can say we'll

have a second compendium out this fall!

(And THAT li'l announcement is why we printed this letter!)

Hey Kirkman and Company,

I was reading through the letter hacks in #91, and something struck me as interesting/odd. Sina responded to Rune's question, regarding the disposability of characters, saying that "the beginnings and ends of lives must be explored." Now I'm one of those guys who has absolutely no beef with the pace of "The Walking Dead." Being that it seems primarily a story about human interaction I wouldn't even mind if there was less action and fewer zombie attacks. In that vein, Sina's statement shocked me with the realization that I couldn't remember a single character dying of "natural" or non-violent causes. It seems to be that in a world with diminished access to medical supplies and personnel, natural death and accidental injury would be almost as common as zombie/raider related casualties. While I certainly wouldn't venture to tell you how to write your own book (it's not like I've ever won a massive shitload of Eisners), I do think this would be a device worth exploring. Imagine the group mourning and processing the death of a character like Dale if he'd simply had a heart attack carrying some buckets of water uphill. How would people even relate to a mundane death in a world so wracked with violence? I'd love to know your thoughts about this even if it is never employed within the story.

If only you hadn't said "non-violent." Dale was old, but not THAT old... There's a time and a place for that kind of drama, but I feel like a touching "Andrea gets a lump on her breast" story arc would immediately pull fans out of the immediacy and urgency of the universe. Right?

Well, I've always wanted to do a "So and so died from the flu" story, but people keep getting eaten first. So this is a valid criticism. It will happen eventually... and we did kind of have Allen die from complications of having his leg cut off... but that doesn't really count.

Cheers,

Jesse Berlin

p.s. Is there any way to get people to stop asking about the origin of the zombie apocalypse? I feel like this gets answered three or four times in every letter hacks.

I've been trying, dude. That's why I periodically will publish that request, just to reiterate: NOT GONNA HAPPEN. Take it as a good thing: we're getting new fans every month who are absorbed in the comic!

As long as people are interested and enjoying this comic, I can ignore getting the same questions asked over and over. "When is Compendium 2 coming out?" is something I've been dealing with on issue sixty-something... and seeing as how Compendium 1 had 48 issues in it... we couldn't do volume 2 until we had 96 issues done. I look forward to getting asked about Compendium 3 over the time it takes us to get to issue 144... sigh.

TWD,

First, I am a huge fan! It started when I was first told about your show by a friend who knows I am a big Romero fan. Then instantly I located your graphic novel on my iPad (don't judge me - I feel I have to call it that because of my age). Regardless, I LOVE the fact that you have different stories for both. You make this entire adventure worth reading AND worth watching. This is often a difficult task. For example, I have read every Harry Potter book...after two movies I could not find a reason to watch the rest. What is the point when the novels provide so much more and just have you wondering why did they cut that?

You should feel terrible that you have turned me into a stocking fan. I watch your show, also the talking dead, have read every graphic novel and even bought your book from Audible. Now I am looking at Invincible as you only write one a month...What the hell do you do with the remaining 28 days after your team creates the 20-some pages? If you would like any suggestions on how to spend our hard earned cash during this down time, please be sure to ask. :-)

He buys old toys and Erik Larsen art on ebay.

And Rob Liefeld art!

The next episode is titled Nebraska which is my home state...I need to be sure you don't screw this up! Even the show The Big Bang Theory has got Nebraska right. You see Kaley Cuoco wearing a husker shirt and watch the football game. It is clear that it is a religion here. I am positive a good percentage of our walking dead would be wearing (and bleeding) red. If you put us all in overalls and cowboy hats I will be upset. You don't need to worry about me threatening to not buy everything you slap your name on - just know that I will talk bad about you all the way up to the cash register.

I'm only giving this a shot because Saddle Creek Records is in Omaha...

To be clear - Nebraska is the perfect place to go when shit hits the fan. We are the last to get everything...fashion...a good QB...a Chick-fil-a...and I am positive zombies. On 9/11 where did the president go? That is right - Offutt Air Force Base - Nebraska! It is the headquarters to the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) and probably have more guns and bullets than dead to shoot...plus rumor is that us hicks all carry one. :-)

Fashion AND a Chick-fil-a? Robert, this guy gets us!

Please create another novel. Please hire some help and provide me two reasons to open your iPad app with a raising heart. Please don't listen to those kids who are upset about things moving slow in your graphic novel - love every one! Please allow me to provide your kid with a proper ivy league education.

Another novel is on its way! Keep checking back with us for more details!

Finally, when you end this adventure...end it. Don't just stop. All good stories are remembered on how they end.

Love what you have done!

Thank you,
Rich Hoffman
Omaha, NE

PS Do I need to say anything bad to get published? If so, I really don't like that I am waiting for Shane to get capped by Carl. I am also supportive of

an early check for Carl in the graphic novel but like him in the show. I hope you continue to screw with me and keep him Shane alive in the show and kill the boy in the graphic novel. That would show me! Keep it up!

This isn't even a bad comment! And no, you don't have to be critical for the sake of getting published. Just write in something interesting for fans to talk about. Like: is Daryl really on that Something to Fear teaser?

Wait, WHAT?!

Dear, Robert Kirkman and WD Crew

First off I just want to say thanks for an awesome story that keeps me on my toes all the time when I read. I never knew what The Walking Dead was until the season 2 starter. I was hooked then, I then watched the whole first season on Netflix. Then I heard there was comic books on the series. I mean Wow there could be a better story out there!! I almost have the whole except some of the early ones and a couple in the middle. I have also gotten rise of the gov. too, I like the whole book so far and I love how you tied in the "all dead" sign into book like Rick saw in #9. Now I have a question to ask you. I heard behind the grape vine that in the comic series that you are going to move the crew to a high school like your original plans is that true?

Thanks,
Flandy

Robert's letting me write a spin-off, where part of the group stays in an abandoned high school and tries to educate the students... although the fun is that there are classes for survival!

It's called Grimes Academy. We will debut the first issue at Comic-Con during Robert's Silly Ideas panel!

Wait, WHAT?!

Hello Kirkman,

Fistly, I'm going to start by saying that I don't trust this Jesus guy. Anyone who refers to himself as Jesus is probably far too arrogant for anyone other than sheep to like. So having said that, I don't like his community either. Also, the second you did that full-page shot of him, I couldn't help but notice his resemblance to the Governor. Of course, I'm not saying it is the Governor, but could there be some relation? He did say they were close to other communities. How close are they to Woodbury?

Hmm, how close indeed!

You'll enjoy Jesus' arc, no matter if he turns out to be a bad guy.

Secondly, my friend had a genius idea for an eventual zombie uprising which would be terrific in your book. Rick and the gang should surround the community with treadmills. Attach the treadmills to the generator. Put the roamers to good use. It would be a brilliant tactic, turning the zombie menace to the good of mankind. Do it!

Luke

Well, Robert, if you really want to give the fans an ending they will be talking about for ages...

Wait, WHAT?!

While I was 95% sure you were kidding in issue 90, I went back to issue 83 and now as far as I'm concerned, the porch-dwelling zombie they pulled in and hacked up to cover their scent was Andrew J. Shaw. Especially since his (re)killing seemed a little more vindictive than most. Hell, when I tried googling AJS the first result even looks like that walker a bit. This means nothing since it is probably a pretty common name, but yes, my obsession with TWD has reached the point when I am trying to web-stalk the people who send you mail. I guess my creepy knows no bounds.

Andrew J Shaw, we have made you a celebrity. Now please get an unhealthy coke problem and crash plenty of SUVs? KTHX

Anyhow, love TWD. This is the only comic other than Sandman that I've ever followed and yes, this is my comic letter-writing cherry being broken. I feel like a real woman now. Keep up the amazing work! Also, you should totally [insert lame fan idea here - chainsaw!] and promise me you'll never kill [insert favorite character!] Yeah, I think that about covers all the letter-writing bases.

Cheers,
Jo from Boston

Were we gentle?

Well, I've got to go now. I've still got to take care of a small book called Invincible before I leave, and I need to tend to a real sleeper book called Thief of Thieves...

Come back in three weeks (YUP!) as we'll have more advancements in the A Larger World storyline, and maybe a few more details about plans for San Diego Comic-Con and issue 100?

Best,

-Sina Grace

THREE WEEKS! Wait, WHAT?!

-Robert Kirkman

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE! We invite you to enjoy a preview of Terry Moore's new book RACHEL RISING starting on the following page. Terry is a personal hero of mine dating back to my self-publishing days. I've always been a fan of his work and an admirer of everything he's been able to accomplish independently. So read this, it's great--and then do yourself a favor and purchase it at your local comic shop, a TPB will be available soon if you want to preorder it and all the issues released are available RIGHT NOW on the COMICS app by Comixology. So dive in!

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Three weeks, Walkers!

This is Sina Grace here, completely exhausted by our break-neck pace leading up to the much-to-be-talked about issue 100. We'll be coming out every three weeks until then.

YOU'RE exhausted?! What do you even do? You're an editor! Think about all the hard work I do! I'm carrying this book... I'm slaving away to get these stories written... and Charlie... he's doing... a little bit... too.

That was me making a joke while pointing out that Charlie does all the work. It's absurd that we're able to go on a 3-week schedule like we have. Charlie--you're the best! Back to you, Sina!

Also, this will be a little late coming to you, but we got our numbers in for the season finale, and I know that everyone involved is so grateful to your dead-ication (ugh, a new low, even for me). The TV series received record-breaking numbers -- 9 million viewers! Take that, Zooeey Deschanel!) Anyway, thanks!

Reader responses to issue 93 were varied, so let's dive right in.

Robert,

I feel like I...we...me and you, and all fans of TWD, have been here before. So Thumbs Down for running around in this Particular circle once again! No mention of Carl this issue. I was excited by one of the double-page-spreads, however! Just think: Rick, Andrea, Michonne, Abraham and company living in a big skyscraper! Oblivious to the Bitters roaming the streets! Why, you could have them start repopulating the species again--maybe make or use some hang-gliders to go scout for food, etc!! Also, how many Bitters/ Roamers/ TWDs can there be? And what happens when they run out of 'food'? Are these things you've thought about before maybe...or am I going around in circles, too? I notice most of Kirkman's stuff is original concept or solo super-hero series; what about a group?? Come up with a great name for a team and awaaaaaay we go! Right? The world is eagerly anticipating the newest Youngblood after all; not by you of course, none of yours worked at all...but then they weren't at Image, or recently, now were they? I'd honestly stop working with Jason Howard if I were you, no offense or nothing. It's just that Astounding Wolf-Man didn't last and...well, even I've stopped reading Super Dinosaur! He could write SD with someone else, of course. And pretty much all Skybound books feature male leads! Ever hear of Wonder Woman, Catwoman, Spider-Girl, Bomb Queen? Just trying to help out and offer a discerning opinion, as always.

Andrew J. Shaw

Thank you, as always, for your discerning opinion, and for giving us a great start to the letters column.

Have you not seen 28 Days Later, or played Parasite Eve? Skyscrapers are the #1 worst place to stay safe. Hang gliders, huh? There is a namby-pambier suggestion below.

As for your comments about Super Dinosaur... well, you all should read Super Dinosaur #10 for our comments on that! Andrew wrote to that title, too! #crosspromotion #bookmarket

I've missed you, Andrew... it's good to see you writing letters again. Whenever I start to get cocky after seeing ratings or how well Walking Dead is doing, I

just look in the mirror... but if that doesn't work, I read your letters. THANKS!

Dear Walking Dead,

Ok I'm loving it all right now. The book is doing good things & season 2 has been a high energy roller coaster (that's a good thing by the way). However I heard a rumor the other day involving the Great Michonne and I just wanted it cleared up. Say it ain't so that she will not be joining Rick & co. on the silver screen. I can't even begin to think what a colossal mistake that would be.

So please, if you're considering this dreadful possibility, don't deprive your viewing audience that will never appreciate the comic book format of such a bright & beautiful character. Here I'll help. When casting Michonne think the lovely actress Tracie Thoms. GENIUS!

Perry France
Paris, KY
Sent from my iPhone

Yeah, this makes me LOL.

Sorry fans, if you missed the news: MICHONNE'S BEEN CAST IN THE SHOW. If this issue is the first you're hearing of it, then you need to move out from under that rock and give Danaï Gurira a warm welcome to the cast! And watch more Treme!

TWD Team,

Holy Cow. How embarrassed was I when I saw that my letter about Rick and Andrea making kissy-face was published in the issue that introduced the guy who may or may not completely change TWD forever? I mean, there I was obsessing over a kiss, and Robert's about to throw us the biggest curve ball since Carl got shot.

Yeah, smooth move there.

A word on kissy-face: It speaks highly of your comic that a 25-year-old guy whose favorite comics are invariably horror titles (I'm loving Haunt by the way) will write in about two characters "sharing an intimate moment." Robert has mentioned a few times that the book isn't about the zombies (or as Rick put it, that the survivors are "the walking dead."), but about how the survivors cope with living in a world which, by its brutality and violence, denies them much hope. Well, I hope I've absolved myself; I felt like a total fan-boy. On to business. Issue 93 is easily the best issue of TWD yet. What made it so good? I can't figure out if I think Rick is a mighty good leader or not. I mean, his caution is warranted (Need I mention the Governor? The would-be rapists on the way to DC? The cannibals?) Then again, what about the people in the current community? The original members were pretty swell folks for the most part. These other people could be on the level. Rick can be so cold now. He's changed so much, and I love it. I might hate him sometimes, but he's a dynamic character. I just wonder if he's become too sure that the world is as he sees it. Ever since the escape from the prison, he seems determined to believe that everyone out there wants to hurt him. It's a point of view that definitely makes sense given the state of the world, but I wonder if it's an attitude that might end up costing him his life instead of saving it.

Your loyal reader,
Jesse
Memphis, TN

Glad you dug this issue. We'll be seeing how the team's morality (and morale) plays out in coming

issues, and what living in a larger world is going to do to an already-hardened protagonist.

Hi Guys,

Just a thought.

How come Rick and the crew never use bikes? They are plentiful, easy to maintain, energy efficient, have no fuel requirements, can tow supplies, can be high speed, can go off road.

Seems like a massive resource going to waste. Cars won't last forever, or very long at all in fact, when the infrastructure around them has collapsed.

As I said, just a thought.

John

Issue one. Also: NAMBY PAMBY.

Additionally: the only time bicycles are acceptable in media is when youngsters have to get around town without driver's licenses or they've got an alien who manages to elevate them so high they end up resembling the Amblin Entertainment logo (that's an E.T. reference, y'all).

With the roads in the condition they're in and zombies all around--they're not that practical.

ps - I think it's overlooked in general in the genre because the zombie genre is predominantly American, and you guys love your cars!

We also love Mad Men, but you don't see us doing a scene where Rick wonders what it would be like if the apocalypse took place in Manhattan during the 60s.

Another hit for the Bad Idea one-shot!

Issue #93 was my last issue as a reader. I don't know where this series went, but it's been too long of the same old thing: Threat of another group of humans raiding, some walkers killed, and moments of 'enlightenment' amongst characters when they have heart to heart conversations like it's the ending of 1980's Full House episodes. It seems all the imagination that fueled the series has completely disappeared, leaving only boring action moments and completely unrealistic banter.

Matt

Well, I wish you would have stuck around for this issue... which marks the end of the 16th volume, the eighth hardcover, the fourth deluxe omnibus, and the second compendium... maybe the moments of 'enlightenment' have come to a conclusion that's been years in the making.

Or maybe we would have still left you bored. Either way, thanks for sticking with the series this long, and I hope you mentioned that you wrote us to your local comic shop clerk, and they've told you that we published your ornery letter.

Also, at the very least--keep watching the show! Wakka wakka!

Hey Sina and Robert!!

You can't imagine how unbelievably stoked I am for Issue 96!!! I'm crossing my fingers that this new community doesn't turn out to be another Woodbury. Can either of you give any small hints about what's to come for the grand finale?

Well, you don't need hints any more... but I'll give you a hint for issue 100 before you ask:

Epic violence.

Now, this is directed at Robert, and it's on the topic of the show: please tell me you're going to give T-Dog a story soon. He's been by far the most underutilized character. I mean, it was understandable that he didn't have much focus in the first season due to you guys having to cram a whole season's worth of material into only 6 episodes. But seeing as how Carol has been developed quite nicely this season (good job to the writing staff by the way), I was expecting him to be given the same treatment. He still basically acts like an extra though, a background presence. Sometimes I forget he's even there.

All you, RK.

With such a large cast, it's essential that

sometimes characters drop back a little while we focus on others, but T-Dog is a great character and IronE Singleton is an amazing actor and I promise he'll be getting his moment to shine eventually. I love that guy.

Matt

P.S. I want you to promise you won't water down The Governor when he's eventually brought in....

I promise.

Hiiii!!!

Okay so I didn't plan on ever writing to you because it would end up being the most boring letter of OMG I LOVE YOU ETCETC*insert fangirlshrillhere* BUT. Then I saw this excruciatingly long letter about some dumbass (TJ RICHTER or soemthing. >:K) whining about the TV series all dramatic and I thought what the hell.

First and foremost, I LOVE that you didn't make the TV series identical to the comics. Not that I hate the comic *I dooontt* But when shit is regurgitated all I can do is compare and scrutinize or just get really bored (This happened with Harry Potter :() SECOND. Holy shit. Jon Bernthal is so badass (and yummy).

um..... where was I going again?

.... Anyway... You guys rock!!!! Im not just saying thisss you really reallyreally doooo. I've always loved zombie-anyshtings but before TWD came along zombie stuff was really meh and at a stalemate but then BAM TWD to the rescue. Woop! And when I say you guys I dont just mean you Kirkman (though you too rock) But Charlie, Cliff, Rus, even Sina. :D Btw, You're so cute in the letter hacks.

Cliff is the cutest of us all in real life.

True. He's adorable.

OH one more thing. My sister never believes me when I tell her the pages are always the same number. I count it every time! TELL HER (pretty please :))

Hey sis- the pages are the same every time. We never deliver less than 22 a month, cool?

There have been a couple issues along the way where we've done MORE, there are a few 24 pages issues here and there... and, I think... one that's 26 pages.

- Leyla Feyzullahoglu

P.S Since everyone is asking I should too. :) I could be a zombie if you're interested in a 5'2" girl (no braces or glasses here woopwoop). But to be honest since i cut my hair short I kind of look like a prepubescent boy (that could work too righttt?)

PRO TIP: Just look up casting calls for extras in Atlanta... we have no power over that stuff!

... P.P.S Sorry I keep thinking of things after im done. Will there be any dogs in the series? OH and are walkers interested in animals? In the TV series they had that one eating a deer but I dont think ive seen it in the comics yet (unless my memory is fuzzy?) What if the animals ate the walkers? That would get rid of the issue :) yayyyy unless theres a side effect? I think rick and the crew need to experiment feeding people walkers if thats good then everyone wont have to worry about lack of food :)

First story arc, yup. No zombie animals, sorry.

P.P.P.S (does this even exist?) When is that Michonne T-shirt going to restock? That shits been sold out for weeks. make more please!!!

We got an even better one up at skybound.com! Go go go!

Okay, see you in three weeks! There's so much more madness to come now that we're beginning the SOMETHING TO FEAR arc!

Best,

-Sina Grace

Get to work, Charlie!! (As I type this... he's about to start issue 98, the man is insane!)

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Three weeks, Letter Hacks!

THREE WEEKS!

This is your faithful and friendly neighborhood editor, Sina Grace here... excited to bring you another titillating issue of The Walking Dead.

TITILLATING!

As of press time, the covers (count 'em COVERS) for Walking Dead 100 have been revealed... man oh man were those tough secrets to keep! We've still got a handful yet to unveil, so keep your eyes peeled to the interwebs for contributions by Frank Quitely, Sean Phillips, and many more!

Bryan Hitch, Todd McFarlane, Marc Silvestri, Ryan Ottley! And maybe even some more surprises (by the way, it's Kirkman here in italics, as always).

We've got a plethora of letters about issue 94, so let's get to it already!

To the Dead and the Living;

I'm getting pretty excited about issue #100 and looking forward to the special guest appearances of Invincible, Wolf-man, and especially the Battle Pope. Should be a fun-filled, action-packed issue! The wedding will be lovely, and I can't believe (s)he is actually dead. Most of all - I think the new outfits will really help to push the series and help sales.

Who told you that Rick gets a new leather jacket?

As for issue #94 - it was nice to see the group actually go from a point A to a point B after being in one place for such a long time. It did seem over before it really began, but we're out of the village and that makes me happy. Having a man named Jesus lead the group through water to safety was an interesting artistic choice. I can only wonder what Jesus will reveal on the top of the hill. Maybe some secret rules of survival revealed during a fire? (yeah, I know... wrong guy)

Comparative mythology in comic books aside, I am actually very interested in seeing some action/change in the comic around the 100 mark. You've likely heard much feedback on the slower pacing of the book - I'm probably pretty guilty of that myself in previous letters, but I accept that the narrative is best told (and read) more slowly. Although I still buy monthly as I refuse to go trade-only. I'm sure that there is something brewing for #100 :) I'm personally hoping that you will address the psychology of Carl growing-up in a world of the dead and the fallout from his past decisions. It just seems too rich a vein not to mine.

Robert's most likely killing Carl.

Come on, Sina... you're not allowed to joke like that. In all honesty, I feel like almost every issue is about Carl's psychology. We have something MUCH bigger planned for issue 100. Just you wait.

At any rate, I just wanted to drop a line and say thanks again from a long-time reader. I'm also very pleased at your broader success in so many other areas. While I do not know you personally, I am always happy to see someone with a passion for comics enjoy success! My belief is that comics are a special form of story-telling and I am glad to see the broader world being brought to the same realization.

Frank Bergdoll
Calgary, Alberta

Don't worry about issue 100 being all about stunts. While the solicitation confirms you may be reading one of the bloodiest, heartrending issues to date, there are no plans for full color sequences, or Super Dinosaur stepping onto the scene to rid the world of the undead hordes.

Just good old fashioned Carl-killing.

SINA!!!

Hello Robert and Sina!

I love the AMC show and am now faithfully reading the comic. I never thought a comic book could out soap opera a TV drama, but you have done it! Bravo! For Issue 100, could Shane come back from the dead? If not, what about his long lost twin brother? Love those love triangles. Love 'em!

Yours in life and death -

Anthony

So you want Shane to come back from the dead... again?

Shane's twin brother Blaine is going to be a resident of The Hilltop... he leads the town's choir! I'm sorry, but silly notions get silly responses (and apparently I only reference Fox TV shows? Which is weird because I only watch AMC and NBC...)

Hi Mr Kirkman and Mrs sexy Sina,

First off i should say thanks for the walking dead. Thats genuine, its hard to get sincerity across on email. However would also like to say damn you for the absolute fucking my bank account has taken through my burst of obsession with the comics. Im a huge fan of the show so eventually decided id get the comics, bought volume 1 on my iphone, thought what the hell its only £7 whats the worst that could happen, now here i am 15 volumes and £105 later. Fortunately however you're more than welcome to my money as the walking dead from the beginning to present is fucking epic. Not sure why but i have a growing sense of dread for Glenn since the time in Letter Hacks you listed the characters you killed and missed writing for and Glenn was on the list, hopefully a mistake not fore shadowing. He is my favourite character, the geeky everyman that i can relate too. I realise nothing anybody says would change a creative decision you make but if you are planning on offing him look deep inside you soul and dont do it. Seriously i would rather you gauge out Carls other eyeball and have the other characters play an inpromtu game of squash with it. At the risk of alienating myself from the hardcore Carl fans out there i also dont want Carl to die, i mean i love child mutilation as much as the next man but holy cow that boy has suffered. Are you still involved in the making of the show as i just heard about the casting of a fellow Brit as the governor, and i am so excited but also hoping they can do justice to an amazing character.

Don't worry, David Morrissey is going to do an amazing job as The Governor... just you wait. It's going to be awesome.

I read these comics in volume form rather than individual comics and will have to wait till volume 16 is out before i can know if you have replied to this but hey ho, what is life without patience.

Without wanting to sound like i am licking arse, keep up the amazing work and i cant wait for many more years of The Walking Dead.

Michael Harrop
England

David Morrissey is indeed cast as the Governor! You know who's excited to work with him? Steven Yeun—the guy who plays Glenn!

TWD crew,

I'm going to skip all the normal stuff and move straight to questions. We haven't seen numbers in a while so I'll throw those in.

I. Has anyone ever said, oh I wish this would happen and you thought, "Oh shit... That is what's gonna happen!" Have you also chosen not to print letters because of this?

I try to avoid redundancy in letters columns, but just because people say "don't kill Andrea," doesn't mean I'm not going to print the letter 'cuz they caught on to something.

In the past, it HAS happened. I know I've edited sections out of e-mails before. A lot of people figured out Thomas was the serial killer in the prison (and looking back, it might have been a tad obvious) but it really doesn't happen that often.

II. My annual Zombie Movie Day is coming up. Sunday Apr 8th. What will you be watching? Shawn of the Dead is my favorite but I think something different is due this year.

We watched Sex and the City 2. Four zombies raid the Middle East. Wocka wocka!

I haven't watched a zombie movie in a long time actually, I've just been too busy. I'll have to break into the archive and watch some Romero. I've really been itching to watch that movie UNDEAD... it's pretty great and I haven't watched it since it came out.

I thought you were always going to keep TWD paper copies ahead of online copies. I'm glad you didn't since I'm in the middle of a 5 month move and comixology is keeping me up to date until I'm done. This actually brings up 2 questions.

III. What's up with Comixology not printing the Fatale preview? Ain't that some shit.

Fatale previews are all over the Internet already! We only print the story and letters columns. Remember the good ol' days when we didn't even do the latter?

IV. What made you decide to release paper and online at the same time? Or wasn't it your choice?

Robert can elaborate on this.

I feel like the digital audience is a new audience. I feel that print has a dedicated audience and there are new people out there who don't go into comic shops, who want to read the stories and for them, reading them online or on some kind of device is a better option.

I'm a big supporter of multiple formats. You like paperback collections, we're here for you. Hard covers? We've got that too. You want something a little more special, like a big slip cased hardcover? We've got that too. Compendium? Check. Digital, to me... is just another format.

V. David Crisp's letter concerning people's word balloons brought up an interesting point that I agree with. I also disagree with your response. I think everyone has certain ways they say things and they don't have to be from the 50s, a scientist or a party boy to make their word choice distinguishable. Slang, Swearing, Brief statements, can't stop talking, single syllable vocabulary, etc... I think you're an amazing writer but I think that area could use some help. I recognize that the medium isn't always helpful in this area but still. This brings me to something I've often wondered about most writers. Do you base any characters on people you know in real life? Not necessarily the entire person but certain parts like personality or mannerisms?

I know the answer to this for Invincible... but I can't answer for Walking Dead. RK?

Sure, I do that from time to time, not whole people, but pieces of them, mannerisms and such. And yeah, some people have distinct ways of talking... but I feel like when you do that too much it becomes a gimmick.

VI. Do you get questions about your comics from your family and friends? I would imagine Sina is full of them.

Till next month,
Dan

I'm full of questions for Robert?

Not too much, no. My family reads the book, but they don't ask me about it very often. My wife doesn't read anything I do and my children are too young.

Hey Kirkman and Co.

I've been a reader since issue one and it's been awhile since I last wrote an email. Here's a quick note with some suggestions and observations about the comic, the show and Kirkman.

First off, Rick should be dubbed "Rick the Prick". He seems to be off his nut in a big way and a raging a-hole with anger issues but it's totally understandable, he's a product of his environment. He's on his way to becoming the next GOVERNOR!

Prick Grimes? Sorry, it's my job to improve upon nicknames.

NICE one.

Season 2 of the show started off somewhat slow and irritating with the whole Sofia story line dragging out way to long but the big barn reveal made up for it. Don't know why I didn't see that coming! Awesome job! The second half of season 2 has been great and you have restored my faith for the time being.

PLEASE go back to the NON GLOSSY paper in the comic! The glossy paper shows greasy finger prints far too easy on the black areas and I've actually lifted off and smeared some of the letter pages if my finger tips rest on it too long.

What do you say, RK?

I'll see what I can do.

OH! Congrats on becoming one of the Top 5 merchandising WHORES of all time next to Star Wars, Star Trek, KISS and IRON MAIDEN! Good job! We will all know you have totally sold out when TWD starts appearing on kid related product or ass napkins. You are getting pretty close though. Sorry I can't afford to help support you and your most likely extravagant lifestyle you are now living due to your massive success because I'm broke. Keep up the good work and I'm sure other fans can help put your kid's thru college with their money.

Yours in Jest

Marc Cawiezel
Saint Peters, MO

First off, you forgot ALL about Austin Powers. Nothing beats Austin Powers. And Ed Hardy.

While The Walking Dead is certainly living on via alternative merchandising opportunities, it's fair to say that everything Robert's committed to has come from a place of "I think this would be cool if..."

I cannot tell you how many KISS-esque stuff has been thrown down Skybound's way that we've passed on. You'll never see a Walking Dead energy drink, pinky swear.

Yeah, I could name about a hundred things more merchandised than TWD. Ever heard of Spider-Man? We're doing a lot, but people seem to like it and it's not affecting the comic in any negative way.

If it helps at all, I'm not spending any money on anything crazy. No gold sinks or waterfalls in my house... it's all Garbage Pail Kids, old Transformers and college funds. My kids are 6 and 3 right now... college is going to be EXPENSIVE... so, y'know... help me out.

And Charlie spends all his money on LEGOS. Not even kidding.

Kirkmanly

Did you know you were featured in chew #24 pg 8? hehe. I love it. YOU WILL TOO.

Peace,
Leyla <3

Oh yeah! Pick that up, Kirk-fans! I mean, that is assuming you aren't picking Chew up already! We love that book, and the guys behind it!

Or rather... we DID...

P.S did you plan on TV Carl and comic Carl both to fraternize with the enemy around the same time???? CONSPIRACYYYY.... sort of > _> !

Not rly no.

That was a weird coincidence... him talking to Jesus in the comic and Randall in the show... pretty neat.

Now I have to buy a copy of Playboy to get a exclusive Michonne backstory comic?!?!? oh how the mighty have fallen.....er I mean sold out. dude this is beyond low, I will not be buying this issue of Playboy. I have a wife and 2 kids and if I brought this magazine home I would never hear the end of it, that and it's disrespectful of myself and to my family. I have been a loyal follower from #1 to present and I feel really heavily shit on by this. You've lost a lot of respect from me, and on your image forum too from what I've read over there. I hope to god you reprint this as a backup in issue 100 or something. as it stands right now I'm going to pirate the 6 page comic, you or Playboy aren't getting any of my hard earned money for this ridiculous publicity stunt. Shit like this is completely uncalled for.

George

Well, this criticism was bound to happen.

Robert can speak more on his decision to do the story with Playboy, but I do want to point out that Hugh Hefner has been a great supporter of comic books and comic artists, and the opportunity to tell an uncompromised story about a fully clothed and strong woman in the magazine felt more like a celebration than a sell-out.

Thanks, Sina. George, do you like comics? I imagine that you do. So I would assume that you would like more people to be READING comics. Let's set aside whatever opinion you have for Playboy for now and let's just recognize that there are a large number of people reading Playboy that do not read comics. Same as there is a large number of people watching The Walking Dead.

That Michonne story was a STUNT... a stunt to get people to read comics. Admittedly, in particular MY comics, but in theory, only at first. You watch the show, you see the comic in Playboy, you buy a Walking Dead trade... if you like it, you get all the volumes, when you run out--you might eventually seek out OTHER books if you like it... that could lead to someone buying Fatale or Saga or Chew or any number of awesome books.

I'm willing to bet that Playboy Michonne story got us at LEAST one new lifetime comic reader. Could be 10,000... could be 500... but I KNOW it got us at least one.

So isn't that a good thing? And hey, I'm sure it wasn't all that hard for you to pirate it... so what are you complaining about?

Okay, I'm not even kidding about giving you another heaping helping of Walking Dead in three weeks.

Looking forward to 100,

-Sina Grace

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Bye, Abraham.

Jeez, Sina--that sounds a little insensitive.

Not intentional, Robert. I'm truly sorry to see the guy go, but this is pretty much a sign of times to come: Negan's not f*cking around with our survivors. I cannot wait for the bajillion letters freaking out about this issue (and the multiple inquiries requesting the original art—you people make me sick).

Be nice!

If you want to learn more about any of the Walking Dead 100 hijinx, please visit www.walkingdead100.com, where we'll have updates about exclusives, events, and more.

There's an insane amount of things that will be going on, leading up to this issue... so be sure to check out that website. It may be the only way to keep track of it all!

Letterz time.

Hi Robert and Sina,

Did I just witness Rick slice this dude's throat after coming to The Hilltop? I've really seen a shift in Rick ever since meeting Jesus. He's really come unglued and almost unpredictable and not thinking things out before acting, which I do not blame him because Gregory getting stabbed in the stomach was from out of nowhere. I do have a few questions:

1. Have we seen a complete shift in Rick to become (even more) aggressive and territorial?

A COMPLETE shift? There's stuff yet to come that could further Rick's territorial nature.

We'll just have to wait and see.

2. Could Rick even survive with Gregory pretty much being at the helm of the Hilltop or would he take over as soon as he gets the chance?

Read and find out.

Yeah.

3. Is Jesus basically a glorified hippie?

Do glorified hippies know martial arts?

Long hair and cool beard does not a hippie make.

I'm really loving the storyline so far and cannot wait to see what kind of reaction from the community Rick will receive. On a side note, I already want the tv show to return as well, nothing else comes close for my obsessive personality.

Daniel Bellay
Fairmont WV

Well, the nice thing is you don't have to wait long for either—we've got this book on the fast track to coming out every three weeks, and by the time you're done losing your mind over the events in SOMETHING TO FEAR, the show will be back in October!

Hey, that'll work out nicely! And y'know what... season 3 is going to be pretty, pretty, pretty awesome. Isn't that right, Bockrath?

I never really read comics, I just didn't think they would be any good quite honestly. But your comics totally blew me away!! I am so glad I got hooked on The Walking Dead AMC series to go and pursue what made the show. So, congrats on getting yourself another avid (GIRL! And a MEXICAN one at that!! :D) follower. I'm even enjoying other titles since you opened up the world of comics to me. You're a great writer. And the artist? Completely, freaking amazing!!! I love the artwork. It's phenomenal.

Compliments out of the way, I have some questions:

1. What's up with Abraham leaving Rosita?? That comment he said totally threw me off; something about him thinking there were no other women in the world. That made me think in racial terms with these characters. Was Abraham leaving her because he found a white chick??

Robert can elaborate on this further, but as someone who excels in tumultuous relationships, I think what made Abraham and Holly work was that they had actually gotten to a place where they could talk.

Race played no part in the decision. Rosita was the only woman around Abraham for a long time. Holly was someone he related to more. It was a hard decision for him, but he felt life was too short to waste any time sparing Rosita's feelings... and man, it's like he saw this issue coming.

2. Again with the whole racial thing: you really haven't addressed this in your comics, and I would kind of like to see you do it. It's part of our world today, and I want to know how these people would deal with it. Is there still racial separations, or does everyone just not care anymore? With that Abraham and Rosita split, you got me thinking there are racial differences, even in a world like that. And that's just insane. And sad.

I personally feel like racism, homophobia, and maybe even sexism—these issues are kind of thrown to the wayside when the plight of humanity comes to the forefront.

That would be an ideal situation, right? We've had racist characters in the past, like Otis--remember him? But it's not something I focus on, or haven't focused on yet... this series is nowhere near ending, probably not even at the halfway point... so you never know what the future may hold (because you're not me).

3. You do a great job at having diverse characters of different races, but spice it up a bit more! You should bring in like Philipinos, Brazilians, etc., make it more diverse. Sorry, this wasn't really a question, more of a suggestion. But, I can make it a question: are you going to show how different parts of the world are doing? Or is this whole comic just going to stay here in the United States?? It would be amazing to know how other people are doing!

Hats off to the team that makes The Walking Dead possible. Thanks guys.

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years" ~Abraham Lincoln

Melina Nunez

There are a few characters of color at the Hilltop, but remember Melina, we're following the story of a group of survivors primarily living in the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia. Robert's being sensitive to what would make sense geographically to this population. So, don't expect a random Malaysian girl with a strong cultural heritage to drop in anytime soon.

To answer your question about other parts of the world: We'll only see the places our characters go to. If they go to Hawaii, we'll see Hawaii, but locations don't interest me as much as characters, so I'd never randomly cut away to different characters in a different region for no reason.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished issue 95 and I am still amazed by what you came up with in every issue. The book's price is pretty steep in my country though. It's enough to buy one week food supply for a family. Moreover, there is only one bookstore selling them. It's located in the capital city of my country, six hour trip from where I live. But again, every single issue is worth it!!!

I'm glad that you don't exploit humanity crisis theme, which

fuels every single Romero’s movie, in your materials. It makes your story seem so realistic without being predictable. But I’m wondering whether you will develop the characteristic of your zombies in TWD or not. It seems that Rick’s group is just too strong for them to take down now. Will you make your zombies stronger too? Such as through evolution or adaptation maybe? Also, I can’t wait to see what Eugene has in mind for weapon alternatives. Survival kit/ weapon invention is my favorite part of a zombie story.

That’s all for now I think. Sorry for choppy English.

Keep scaring people, Nurgifari Muhammad

I’m very curious as to where you live...

Zombies will stay as they are in the series. Don’t expect them to learn to talk or anything. What is keeping mankind from surviving at this point is... mankind.

Indeed.

Kirkman and co.,

I really want to trust this new community, but after issue 95’s ending I don’t think we’re going to be able to. They obviously have their own problems with this “Negan” person, but now Rick is responsible for killing one of their number. Granted, the guy attacked him and the group’s leader, but you know how people are. Rick is a new face and I find it hard to believe that they’re just going to let this slide. At the very least, Rick will be responsible for getting this Crystal person back. That’s just too much drama and is leaning into the realm of cheesy predictability. Don’t go into the realm of cheesy predictability, please. I don’t wanna see Rick trying to be a superhero and solving this larger world’s problems.

On the less critical side of things, I am enjoying seeing some new characters brought into the book. I’ve known for a long time that our group couldn’t be the ONLY group of survivors left in the world. It’s about time we got to some of them. I like Jesus. That’s so weird for me to say, considering I’m an atheist, but the guy is just awesome. Taking on walkers with his hands tied? He’s a fighter and I really hope that he sides with Rick in the inevitable fallout between our happy campers and the hilltop group.

It’s weird to like Jesus because you’re an atheist? He’s not the actual Jesus... just a guy who got that nickname because he looks like him. Also, I’m an Atheist and I totally love Jesus... not my character... the dude from The Bible. He was a great guy, right? He did a lot of nice things for people. What’s not to like?

On to the numbers!

1. I’m so sick of seeing that damn big band-aid on Carl. Can he please have his eyepatch already?

Issue 100, true believer! #notreally

2. Am I right about a fallout coming between hilltop and Rick? If I am, just say that I’m not so that it doesn’t spoil anything for other readers. I’ll know what you really mean. *wink, wink*

I don’t think you’re right, man.

You never know...

3. My eleven year old daughter and I are in love with the show and are supremely excited that Michonne will be in season three. So, can you make it so season three starts next week? Or at least sooner than October? That’s a crazy long time to wait for the next episode.

The only way the show is gonna be awesome is if Glen, Robert, and the entire crew have the appropriate amount of production time to get things going!

Seriously, you guys sometimes act like you’ve never watched TV before. I hear a lot of “why can’t you do 52 episodes a year so there can be one every week?” and “That’s a crazy long time to wait for the next episode!” The time between the final episode of season 2, and the first episode of season 1... is going to be pretty much the same amount of time between every single season of every cable TV show... except Mad Men and The Sopranos, which have had much longer gaps.

I promise we are making the show as fast as we possibly can!

4. Are we going to see the governor again? I’m not wrong in remembering that he was still alive at the end of that whole prison fiasco, right? If we see him again, can it please be at the end of Michonne’s blade? I’d love to see her behead that prick. (no pun intended, but still funny)

He’s totes dead. Sorry.

He had a large portion of his head blown off! He’s dead! You can, however, read more of his story in The Walking Dead novel series that I’m co-writing with Jay Bonansinga... it’s pretty great. Jay is totally tricking people into thinking I can write prose.

5. And last, but not least, can Rick please get laid already? The guy is getting a bit high strung.

Take a look at what is inferred this issue. You’re welcome.

We work quick!

Now, this is like, my sixth time writing in. I am both interesting and critical, and my spelling and punctuation are impeccable. Can you PLEASE publish one of my frackin letters already!! Please please please?! Getting a letter in The Walking Dead is the ultimate in bragging rights and I’d love to rub a few people’s noses in it. You should do it just to further my maniacal pursuit of justified egotism.

Anthony Ellis

I think you spelled “frakkin” wrong, but I’ll let it slide.

Don’t say “Frakkin.”

[Walking Dead season two spoilers contained within]

Dearest Kirkman and the lovely Sina Grace,

I’ve been a loyal reader of TWD since #35 and at the time I was in 7th grade I have almost every issue OMG I know... I leave for Fort Benning September 4th to serve our beautiful country anyway I was hoping you CAN answer a few burning questions...

First answer, thanks for making me feel old. Ugh. Fort Benning is a high school, right?

1) I know telltale is releasing a game by episodes but after all the episodes will there be a complete game for people without online?

Yep.

Can we reveal that? I guess so.

2) Let me just say the show was AMAZING and the fact that it’s over kills me since I’m not gonna be able to see most of the next one but anyway since Dale is dead (R.I.P Dale) there’s an Ark where its fear the hunter and we see Dale yelling ‘tainted meet’ will that Ark eventually be on the show?

Interesting question. Robert?

It hasn’t been ruled out due to Dale’s death. We’ll just have to wait and see, though.

3) Finally How much input will you have on season 3 and any chance Daryl will be in the comic? please please

I have plenty of input in season 3. I’m one of the writer’s in the writers’ room, and I’m an executive producer... and I wrote the comic, and people working on the show like the comic... so they take ideas from it in order to make the show.

Unless you don’t like the show, in which case I have nothing to do with it.

Daryl in the comic? Hmmm... I’ll have to think about that one.

From one Survivors to another,
Michael McDonough
Hamilton Nj

Thanks for writing in, Michael!

[Season two, and random pop culture spoilers ahead]

Greetings from Poland (I bet that’s a first)!

(It’s not—but still an honor to hear from you!)

I’m writing to ask if you mailed some consolatory cheese to go with Mr. Richter’s cheap whiiiine in the letter hacks #93. Seriously, I’m downright concerned about how badly this poor SOB reacted to everything.

Somebody call Whine-One-One!

Nice.

I would like to address some of his problems (and all you other challenged twits who don’t understand writing/literature/story telling/plot/film adaptation/character development etc), if I may!

First, I’ve just read the comic in its entirety in the past week (thank you Comixology for the iphone - get it today!) after having first discovered it through the television series.

I would like to point out that millions of people buy special edition DVD’s not only to enjoy good films/shows, but also to view extras such as deleted scenes and alternate endings. Sometimes people even buy multiple copies of the same film to get their hands on bonus material like that. So, I think the majority of people who are sane and not trying to live out some seriously bitter old man fantasies (I’m looking at you Richter, because you were way too upset that Andrea hooked up with the young beef and not the old jerky - admit it, you just wanted to see an old guy hook up with Laurie Holden, you sicko) actually reasonably appreciate the differences between the show and the comic. The show is keeping everyone guessing, and even die-hard long term readers don’t actually know what happens next. That said, I really don’t see what everyone is crying about; major plot points such as [SPOILERS] Lori’s pregnancy, Hershel’s farm, Dale’s death, Maggie and Glenn

hooking up etc, remain pretty constant. For one, I loved TV! Dale much more than I loved Graphic! Dale because he was at least 5.78 times more logical and wise and really became the voice of humanity, ethics and morality for the group, and [SPOILER] I'm glad he died living up to that to the fullest while trying to save Randal and didn't become the grumpy whiney prick he kind of turned into in the comic with his constant abandonment fetish (still love Dale no matter what and was sad to see him go, both ways).

Second, I'm certain that Peter Jackson got plenty of flack for not including Tom Bombadil and six thousand other "important" details in his film adaptation of the Lord of the Rings, yet the dozen or more Academy Awards he has piled on his mantel probably indicate that he did a damn fine job of it anyway, even if I would have preferred [SPOILER] that he hadn't killed Boromir, he did what he thought was best. The world didn't end did it?! What Mr. Kirkman and the writing and production team are doing with the television adaptation of the comic is absolutely brilliant. As a writer, Mr. Kirkman gets to explore the infinite choices each character makes and the resulting consequences. He has been given the opportunity to take the story to the next level. Rick's character arrives at the proverbial crossroads and turns left instead of right, and his decision may completely change the way things go for the group...or they may not change very much at all and everyone ends up in the same spot in a roundabout way anyway; [SPOILER] for example, Carl eventually does shoot Shane, who is proof of the "we're all infected" theory both in the comic and in the show, and thus fulfills the same damn purpose (fucking brilliant sir!).

Third, we've all read books and had those pivotal moments where we just want so badly for a character to do something else, not cheat on his wife, not die at the end, not go down into the dark cellar in the house where the previous family was brutally murdered, not get betrayed by a partner who turns out to be a double agent, not order extra fries - whatever - we know when we turn the page it will happen. I think it's great that we really don't know what will happen next on the show or in the Comic because the two are not exclusively replicating each other. All we know is that someone's hand does get chopped off. I'm glad we got to know Shane a lot better because he "chose" not to confront Rick in the forest that time and lived to die another day. And I am thankful every moment for the glory that is Daryl Dixon, even if I have to trade Tyresse for him, I forgive you, I do, go in peace.

Fourth, just get over it! There are things I dislike about the show, sure; the [SPOILER] revelation at the CDC that a virus causes the reanimation was probably a necessary plot point, but I prefer the complete lack of explanation in the comic thus far. I love how it could still be anything: virus, terrorist attack, natural mutation, unnatural mutation, act of God, Aliens (so far my bet, heh), and it adds a certain level of curiosity that has now been locked down in the show, it's ok. I think it would be bomb if TV!Rick goes back home to check on Morgan and finds Duane living with his zombie father [SPOILER] instead of Morgan living with zombie Duane. And then Duane ends up being the hard-ass kick-ass kid character and Carl is his little sidekick. Whatever! If the comic reveals in issue #555 that it was actually Aliens, or all a bad dream, or anything that isn't what was revealed in the show, thats OK with me. Do what ever you want Mr. Kirkman, it's your party sir. I'm just happy we're all invited. In conclusion, whiners and haters should realize Mr. Kirkman isn't here to pander to your every whim and write horrible fan fiction, he's here to tell a story. What are you, 8 years old? "Daddy, I didn't like that ending," grow up, or go get reacquainted with your Disney collection, except the Lion King because [SPOILER] Mufasa dies, and everyone hates that. Mr. Grace (I always known you was a boy, son), and Mr. Kirkman, if you ever get sick of these little bitches moaning and complaining, please know that I'm ready and willing to follow up with each and every one of them as per Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back ending sequence. <3

Xo thanks for having our backs.

Don't listen to this guy! You people can complain all you want!

Having said that I have a few tiny questions:

1) [SPOILER] When Michonne shows up, both in the show and in the comic, she has her pet roamers on chains. We never really got an explanation as to how that whole concept worked, what kind of advantages it gave her for "blending in" etc. I'm wondering if the gang (tv or comic) will ever revisit that technique or (at least) discuss it? Seems like it could be useful for things like scouting near areas with large herds. Considering there are still 6+billion possible roamers out there, it could be useful intel to share with everyone else, just in case?

This feels like a Kirkman question if I've ever heard...

Surround yourself with dead people... and other dead people may not realize you're around. It's a pretty simple concept. Take off the arms and the lower jaw and zombies are just not going to be able to hurt you. After a while, they'd give up even trying to get you--and go into "lurker" mode and be very docile. If Michonne ever needed to use this technique for travel again... she would.

1) b. The Governor's zombie daughter was mentioned as being less aggressive if she got fed. Morgan also indicated that Duane behaved a little differently after he was fed (I also can't get over how everyone just let the fact that Morgan murdered people to feed to Duane kind of slliiide), and clearly the Hershel farm people fed the barn walkers on the show and I believe Michonne mentioned that her chain zombies had stopped trying to attack her. Will this be a significant plot point? Can zombies be trained or conditioned? Or is the feeding thing

just a stupid human impulse? Does it matter? Is Sina married?

This isn't a significant plot point, nor do I think it will be explored to any intense extent in the book. One wrong move, and The Walking Dead becomes the ending to Shaun of the Dead. The impulse is definitely zombie impulse, right RK?

I'm not married.

Not YET.

Only RICK knew Morgan had been killing people. Rick chose to keep that a secret, he's the only one who let Morgan slide, because he knew he'd very likely do the same thing in that situation.

2) I appreciate that at some points in the comic certain characters (I think, Alice in the prison?) made an attempt to study roamers, even Eugene seemed to be onto something with the different types. I hope there is a character introduced soon that gives a bit more insight into that (but not a complete insight a la CDC!Jenner). I realize that so far everyone has been scrambling to survive so any remaining scientists/doctors/researchers may have been too busy not getting eaten to focus on that just yet. I have noticed that Charlie has progressively drawn the roamers more and more featureless (oh God, grammar fail, sorry) and most of their clothes are rotted off. We no longer see things as distinct as racial/gender/class indicators like clothing or (albeit mutilated) facial features. Is it safe to say that the roamers are actually rotting (at least from the outside in) and there may be hope that someday all the first generation roamers will just collapse (in another 400 issues or so)? I know more roamers are always going to be created, especially if no one is paying attention when someone has a stroke or a heart attack (actually, as an aside, can a person who died of a stroke reanimate? Or is there too much brain damage in that case?).

Robert touched upon the rotting notion briefly last issue.

My vote is that a stroke victim can still come back.

3) T-DOG IS NOT TYRESSE, GET IT THROUGH YOUR THICK DUMB SKULLS (Not a question, I know, but it had to be said, hopefully for the last time).

Word.

Thank you very much for reading!

Pozdrowienia (many well wishes) from the best part of post-communist eastern Europe.

Hatin' on the haters,

Kasia K

P.S. I love you Charlie!!! Anyone who can't tell your characters apart is a stupid git. Pip pip.

Charlie tips his hat in your general direction.

While drinking tea, pip pip!

Mr. Kirkman,

Prediction for issue 100: Ed O'Neill cameo!

Thanks, Mike Waffles

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

Caught us.

Don't reveal our secrets!

Instead of blathering about how we're approaching issue 99, I want to take a second and let you guys know that The Walking Dead telltale game is a HUGE success -- garnering great reviews and wonderful feedback from both press and fans. Thanks to everyone involved for making a game that we are proud to say is ours, and thanks to all of the fans who took a chance on a new kind of zombie gaming experience.

Almost there,

-Sina Grace

Telltale has done an absolutely stunning job on The Walking Dead video game. I would say that even if it had been a monster failure instead of the monster success that it's become. I can't explain the feeling of pride that game gives me. It's remarkable to see something be so well-received and know that it's due in large part to the hard work and dedication of a team of individuals who could have phoned it in, and been fine, but instead they slaved over this thing to make it perfect, because they cared about The Walking Dead and wanted to do it justice.

Bravo guys... and if you haven't tried the game, people... get on that. Trust me, you'll be glad you did!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

It's already around the corner... I – Sina Grace- literally cannot begin to describe the sheer madness here at the office over this gigantic issue. We're so excited—we're giving a CAR away! Thanks, Hyundai!

What?!! A CAR?!!! That's AWESOME!! This book is so awesome! CARS are awesome!!

I've got nothing to say, and issue 96 was a big one, so let's go over your letters.

Hey guys,

Forgive me as I've never written a letter like this before.

I just wanted to say that I'm rather new to the comic series, but have been following the TV show for quite some time.

I bought a NOOK Tablet to read the comics digitally, after I decided to try out the comics. It's used only to read TWD at this point. I rooted the damned thing so I could load on Comixology!

I really only care about the Nook because Sarah Jessica Parker is their representative. #onlyslightlykidding

Anyways, over the past two weeks, I read issue #1 all the way up to today's release of #96. Man, do you guys have me stoked for Something to Fear! My speculation for the next story arc is overwhelming! I read the other day that issue #100 will have several different covers. I'll be collecting them all, if possible!

They're like Pokemon! Gotta catch 'em all! Or check out walkingdead100.com for ways to nab 'em in one go.

Hmmmmmm.

As an indie game developer, I can only hope to achieve half the (much deserved) success that you have had with the series, Robert!

I'll be reading the series until the day it finishes. Keep up the excellent work!

(I'm not expecting for this to be published, but it would be pretty sweet to see it)

Thanks again, for introducing me to the world of comics, and for having such an excellent series!

-Nathanial B.
Kalamazoo, MI

Thank you for not only being from Kalamazoo, but for also finding a way to read comics that works for you! Here's to the future! Now go to a comic store, buy ten copies of this issue so your parents can frame your letter. They can't do that with the nook ;-)

First of all, I need to start off by saying that issue 96 was a huge disappointment. It's another issue of Rick walking around with an epiphany de jour. "This is the place...this is the place drr drr drr this is what we've been after drr drr drr". Did Rick get bitten and turn into the first talking Zombie? Well, this circular story telling will all be worth the wait if my spoiler for issue 100 comes true.

SPOILER ALERT for your brain! Your delicious brains....

The end of issue 100 will be your finest cliff hanger. We will turn to the last page of issue 100 to see Carl getting bitten by a walker, and it'll be somewhere that amputation isn't an option....I'm thinking on his side around the ribs. OH, the people will wail and whine, and swear that you are a sadistic fucker (not that I disagree on that point) and that they'll never read TWD again. The uproar will be huge. Fans who've been reading since the start will curse you and sell off their whole collections. You will sit there at your desk tapping the tips of your fingers together saying "excellent" like Mr. Burns. And I'm sure a lot of the weirdos out there will thank you.

Issues 101 ends with another great cliffhanger. After the whole issue dealing with Rick coming to terms with Carl dying, we turn to the last page to find a beautiful two page spread of Rick holding his gun to Carl's head while he sleeps.

Issue 102, a strange thing happens to Carl...NOTHING. No fever, no infection, no signs of anything abnormal. Our wonderful surgeon (Denise?) will come to the conclusion that the chunk of brain that was shot out of Carl's head must prevent the zombie virus (or whatever it is) from affecting him. This will lead to some great character development of an otherwise boring character; Denise. We can have her turn into somewhat of a mad scientist. Single people start disappearing from The Community one by one. The group assumes they are moving to bigger settlements. We come to find out that Denise is abducting people and cutting out their eyes and brains trying to duplicate Carl's condition. After cutting up their brains she kills them or lets them get bitten to see if they turn. And yet again another great issue ending with Denise found dead on a table with scalpels and shit hanging out of her eye after performing the surgery on herself. So there's some comic gold for you! I'm going back to writing my own comic. I love The Walking Dead, but my comic is way better...that's a compliment btw (to me).

-Dan Buffaloe
Nashville, TN

I think Zenescope is hiring...

To address the first portion of your e-mail: The "circular" nature of issue 96 is supposed to be exactly that- full circle. I think if you look at the first compendium's ending versus the second... Rick is a different man who can look at the

darkness and find a way to have it all make sense.

Mr. Robert Kirkman & TWD team,

Good day all, and thank you for a wonderful comic series. TWD has me entranced! I'm excited to love and hate your characters, the sick twists of fate, and new world justice. I have been enthralled in both the comic and the show. Anyways, enough of my brown-nosing. I had one question about "The Hilltop" community. Was your idea for The Hilltop based at all off of the parable of Salt and Light in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount or in Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity"? Both mentioned the idea of a "city on a hill" as a place of salvation, and a beacon of hope. I think this Hilltop community is an interesting reflection of the idea of renewed hope, and the foundation of a new American society in this strange world. John Winthrop used the phrase in his sermon when the original colonial America's were founded to inspire Puritan's who called their new settlement a "city upon a hill". It's interesting to see this Hilltop community reflecting the same type of idea that early America was founded upon. Especially with how charitable the locals are, not to mention underlying tones about having to defend against "savages". Either way it's an interesting perspective, and I think it helps me enjoy the story even more to parallel it with history! Thanks for your work, and congrats on your second compendium!

Greg Youngblood
Raleigh, NC

Interesting thought... one I am not equipped to answer. Robert?

No inspiration from the Bible, nope. But I am trying to mirror things to certain elements in history.

Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Grace

I finished reading issue 96 and I just have one thing to say to you guys. You win Robert Kirkman. I have complained about the double page spreads before. I called them filler and thought horrible things about you. This issue had TWO double pagers and a full page all in a row and I loved it. It was cinematic, awesome, and, when used as exposition, much more entertaining than the 9 and 12 panel pages so popular with other writers. On a completely different note, are we going to see more of the aliens in issue 100 or do we have to wait for issue 150? Keep in mind "never" is not an acceptable answer. James Kephart II

The string of double page spreads is in fact a favorite at this office! Sadly, I will 100% confirm that there will be no aliens in issue 100. There will be a SWEET Ryan Ottley cover!

And yeah... I'm not going to say "never" but there are currently no plans to revisit that gag alien story from issue 75.

[SEASON TWO SPOILERS AHEAD]

The Walking Dead Team, I present to you my first fan letter--- moreover a fair warning that I am going to applaud you, scrutinize you, insult you, and close with words of gratitude. I may even throw in a question or two. Let's get to it, shall we?

I'm down.

Firstly, I want to congratulate you on your success with the beloved series and acclaimed TV show. Best of wishes regarding the new video game endeavor. I have read every issue and watched every episode multiple times. I have introduced many friends to the franchise and formed new fans on your behalf.

Bravo Telltale! Bravo Robert!

Uh... like 99% bravo Telltale! They deserve the credit.

Here it comes--- You spent way too much time at the farm in the TV series. I feel you killed Dale off prematurely too. Is there any chance of a cross-over, bringing Daryl at some point into the comic series? Are you waiting until the 4th season to bring back Morgan?

Robert?

We spent just enough time on the farm and Dale was killed at the exact right time, silly. Daryl in the comic series... is unlikely. And Morgan will return in the TV show when the time is right... so stay tuned!

Kirkman, some of the time you treat your fans (that write in) like SHIT. I read every Letter Hacks for insight, confirmation, and a possible teaser. I don't read them for my daily dose of sarcasm, disregard to fan's questions, and ridicule of their ideas. Put a lid on that shit please. Otherwise, I think you're a good guy and tremendous writer.

To all of you, thank you for sustaining my hope in the comic book industry as well as in television.

Greg Harrington
Springfield, MA

It's interesting that you're not down with Robert's fan etiquette. Maybe it doesn't come off the same in writing, but if you see Robert on a panel, that kind of comfort with his fans is more of an icebreaker than anything. I think we're trying to keep things light in the column in the midst of an otherwise incredibly gothic and dour ongoing horror comic.

Just trying to have fun... but y'know... screw you for writing in.

That's clearly a joke. That's clear, right?

Bockrath!

Dear Walking Crew,

Like everyone else; I came in late, got hooked and now loathe the long month in between issues. That being said, I can't tell you how much I love the game. It's like a story that changes every time I watch it. I know that the majority of the credit goes to tell tale games, but this has to be the best way to get my TWD fix between issues/seasons. Thank you so much for agreeing to this collaboration. I wish you guys the best and I can't wait to see what happens next.

P.S. What are the chances we see a revolt against Rick? You eluded to it a few issues ago and then it disappeared.

The revolt against Rick dissipated within that group of people. I'm sure there will always be people who aren't on his side, and we'll definitely see where some of that goes after the next few issues, but right now the thing Rick needs to fear is those dudes with all the weapons on our SOMETHING TO FEAR covers.

Once again, I have so little to say about that which happens in July.

See you soon...

-Sina Grace

Dudes and ladies... next issue is issue 100. Holy crap on a stick I can't believe we've made it this far. YIKES.

See you then!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome readers, to our monumental 100th letters column.

Editor Sina Grace here... ready to answer your letters with as much zest and zeal as when I began helping Robert with this column over two years ago. Thanks for having me along for this crazy ride, Robert!

Charlie Adlard wanted to chime in for this momentous event...

"Wow, my 94th issue... who'd a thunk it? What a milestone... Actually, WOW, issue 100... REALLY, who would have thought it, indeed. This is so much a milestone in so many ways. I know it's a total cliché, but there was no way Robert and I, when we started working together, ever dreamt that it would come to this... I nearly thought I personally might not last past the initial six issues of my run [thank you, Eric, for persuading me otherwise!]. But, when you get to this stage of success, all you ever seem to do is utter clichés... But, I don't think I'd have it any other way. So, thank you Image, thank you Robert, thank you Cliff, thank you Rus, thank you Sina, thank you all at Skybound, and thank you the loyal fans... THANK YOU!

Oh - and looking forward to the REAL milestone - issue #106..."

Robert, you have anything to say?

Lots, but I'll try to keep it brief, because I don't want to ramble on forever. I'd like to thank everyone Charlie thanks but also add everyone at AMC (Bockrath... and the rest) as well as Gale Anne Hurd, Glen Mazzara, David Alpert and even Frank Darabont for helping make the TV show possible and getting us a whole lot more eyeballs for our big spectacular anniversary issue and the lead up to it.

I think some of you might have heard that this issue is shaping up to be the HIGHEST SELLING COMIC OF THE YEAR which is pretty astounding. I never really thought about having a number one book in any month (let alone for the whole year) but I have to say I'm extremely proud that it's something I created, and not some corporate book that has nearly 100 years of fans behind it. I do have to admit that this feels like a pretty special achievement, and I'm thrilled about what this means for comics as a whole.

If you haven't recognized the dawn of the age of creator-owned comics, I think it's pretty hard to argue that it's not here now. If you're not reading all the fantastic creator-owned books from Image (and a few elsewhere- I'm looking at you Mark Millar!) that are too numerous to even list here and are starting to top the sales charts... you're really missing out.

The Walking Dead, although I love it, is far from the best comic being published today.

Sina, let's dive into some mail!

Well, I'm a tad disappointed by the mild outpour of Abraham outrage. That's what I get for expecting crazed rants!

Ok. So I read issue #1 last summer. I didn't like it - not at all. So I decided to stick with the show and forget about the book.

That didn't last. No sir.

Never does.

At the end of "Beside the Dying Fire" I just had to know what was up. Over the course of the next five days, I read all 95 issues. Yep ... 95 issues in five days. I went from "meh" to "I have to wait how long for the next issue? ... FUCK!"

So, thank you. Great book. Great show.

One question ... do you plan to condense the timeline in the show to bring it closer to where the book is now? Just curious what the strategy might be.

Kirkman?

No, the show doesn't need to catch up to the book ever. I like the idea of it existing in the past of the comic timeline.

Oh, and RIP Abraham - I liked him, but reading 95 issues in five days taught me not to hold on to any character too tight.

Keep up the awesome work, and sorry I didn't hop on sooner.

Cheers,

David Fiorito
King of Prussia, PA

Even I've never read that much Walking Dead in one week! I usually cut myself off after 50 issues.

I really need to sit down and read through the series again... it's been a while.

Mr Kirkman and Mr. Grace,

Two words to describe issue 98: Mein god.

First off, FORD? KILLED? BY A TINY ARROW? That shit just came out of nowhere. Not that I'm saying I loved Ford but....damn. Didn't see that coming. Thought I'd be seeing him around for a while.

Second, I bet the guys are gonna give Eugene a hard time for that dick-biting incident, huh? Probably won't help his chances with Rosita very much, either.

Maybe Rosita will see him as a ballsy dude. Or not.

Third, more naked Andrea, please. Just a little side-boob or something every once in a while? That was

pretty satisfying.

The moment you’ve been waiting near a decade for!

Shame on you people!

So, what with all this dick-biting and nudity, I see great things coming for this series and I’m excited for this legendary issue 100 that I’ve heard all about. I keep thinking to myself that Negan’s gonna be some cool action star look-alike and it excites me...a lot. By the way, this is my first Letter Hacks, so I must say thank you, Mr. Kirkman, for creating this wonderful world which has consumed my life. Also, if you lay a single hand on the head of my boy, Glenn, or his girls, hoes will be hunted down and slapped. PEACE.

Jack Russell
Santa Ana CA

P.S. The game is awesome so far.

Congratulations, Jack! You’re here to celebrate issue 100 with us! Yes, our wonderful folks at telltale make an awesome game! So do the folks at ZMan with our board game! You play board games, right?

Dearest Kirkmanly and Sina,

Super pumped for issue #100, but after reading issue #98 I have a few questions:

1. What differentiates The Saviours from the Woodbury group or the cannibals in Fear the Hunters? Why would Rick, who is typically pretty vicious when it comes to threats, become hesitant and scared at the end of the issue?

Kirkman?

It was a moment. A moment where he just found out Abraham, one of his key pieces of muscle was taken out and he had to drag him back into the community himself. So he was a little shell shocked. Also, he was underestimating the Savors... because of his experience with Woodbury and the Hunters... so he wasn’t prepared for this encounter.

2. A fire fight in the community? Won’t that attract another herd?

Given how much travel there’s been around the community, it’s safe to say that a lot of walkers have been disposed of, or at least enough to keep a herd from coming about.

There’s always a threat of that... but they’re prepared to deal with that now.

3. This one’s for Sina. I’ve always wondered what does being an editor for Robert entail? Feeding him grapes and fanning him while he writes his “stories”?

There is NONE of that going on. I do my best to keep on top of his projects, take care of balloon placements, and manage deadlines. Sometimes I buy him a coffee drink, but that’s as close to fanning him as I get!

What is this “fanning” you speak of? Is that something I can get?!

Preemptive congratulations to The Walking Dead team for reaching 100. Here’s to shambling on to hundreds of more issues!

Matt Ferguson

Party hats! OH merch idea! #kidding #oramI

Dear Dead Dudes,

Oh man, issue 100 was _____! I can’t believe that Rick actually _____! And that _____ person is definitely one I’ll be keeping my eye on, he/she is so _____. I gotta admit though, I’m kinda bummed that you killed _____. I mean, I know no

one is safe in this book but _____ was becoming one of my favorite characters and now they’re dead?! Kirkman, you _____/_____, _____/_____, _____!!! Oh well, at least _____ the TV show, right?

I mean... it’s not like you really proved anything here.

Okay, this letter isn’t really from the future (fooled you, I know). Issue 98 came out a couple of days ago. I just wanted to be the first letter you got regarding the monumental events that may or may not occur in #100. Hell, #100 is a monumental achievement on its own! You’re 1/3 of the way to Cerebus which is pretty damn cool. I imagine you’ll get a lot of comments from people wearing their “I Was There First!” shirts who have been around since Issue 1 so I figured I’d send you an image of TRUE die-hards who have managed to stick around from the beginning, I hope you like it (and you definitely have permission to print it if you’d like/have space in the issue).

Thanks for the many years of survival horror. My wife Karen and I love each and every issue.

Nearing ten! Next October (2013)!

Vernon Smith
www.ElMacFearsome.com

Oh and here’s the obligatory “I can’t believe you killed Abraham! Kirkman, you _____/_____, _____/_____, _____!!!

You wouldn’t believe how many expletives we’ve gotten. Still, Carl getting shot is the winner for how many people screamed at us for that.

Reaction has been pretty tame. I’ve only seen a few threats about quitting the book.

Please don’t follow the competition and start having gay zombies!

Your loyal reader
Kenneth Taber

You ruined issue 200.

Sina (sorry Robert this one’s personal)

Last time I wrote in was Issue 72 when I wrote (among other things):

“People are always complaining about the noise guns make in your book. Why no crossbows?”

To which you replied (abridged):

“Simple answer: Who besides me has a crossbow lying around their house?”

A question to which I will now answer: Some pretty major characters in the Walking Dead universe it seems (some even store arrows in their eye sockets).

Anyway gloating over....for now (still waiting for that L shaped hook)

I just want to say thanks for all the quality comics over the years. May it continue for a long long time.

All the best,
Will Tucker

Alright Will, let’s celebrate issue 100 with you calling me out. I believe yours was one of the first letters I answered, so go ahead: call it.

Hi Robert and Sina,

I just found out about the casting for the Governor and, while I’m sure David Morrissey will do a great job, I’m wondering if you guys had considered making Merle from season 1 the Governor. Rick handcuffed him to the roof, forcing him to cut off his own hand, so it seems fitting

that Merle be the one to take Rick's.

As far as I know, the producers always considered Merle to be Merle, and the Governor to be a separate entity entirely. When the time comes, you'll get to see Merle again.

There was never any plan to make Merle the Governor. I good indication that we're not going to do something is if hundreds of people predict it. If it's obvious, we've probably already decided not to do it... because it's obvious.

Moving away from the TV Show and into the comics, I was wondering if Robert could talk a bit about the difficulty in finding new things for these characters to do after so many issues—not to say that there isn't a little bit of recycling (Negan seems to be The Governor 2: Govern Harder)—but for the most part everything feels fresh and that can't be easy to do.

Also, was curious if you think our group of survivors will ever make it back to an urban setting? By now I would think the cities have cleared out to an extent or maybe they haven't, who knows? I guess what I'm saying the group has been in the country for so long that we don't really know how cities have held up against the apocalypse. They were overrun at first, sure, but have any survivors eked out an existence there? What is dealing with the apocalypse like in that setting and what might need to be handled differently than in a rural environment? Some interesting stuff to explore there, I think. But hey, that's just my know-nothing take on the matter.

Big fan of everything you guys do.

Cheers,
Andrew Barr

Kirkman, can you spare any kind of detail here?

We'll see more urban environments eventually, yes. This book is nowhere close to ending... in fact, we're not even close to the midpoint... there's a LOT more story to tell.

[SEASON TWO SPOILERS BELOW]

Heya Kirkman!

First an aside, I used to love comics as a kid - about 6 - that was 40 years ago. I forget what I was reading but it was usually these weird "soldier" stories where dead guys were always rising to rip apart some Nazi or such, and I read fun stuff to. Some reason about 12 I just quit reading them. I found TWD on AMC, and ended up joining a facebook fan group. If you knew me at all then you know the probability of me joining a fan group is 10 bazillion to 1 against... anyway, someone finally, finally talked me into reading the comics as I was afraid the comic would "spoil" the show. I'm buying the Hardbounds for my collection. Just thought, I don't know how you could work it in on Talking Dead, but someone adamantly stating that reading the comic won't spoil your enjoyment of the TV show might bump your sales a little.

Another side, your series has changed my vocabulary slightly. The two most common are:

Shane; verb; - To do something underhanded or devious to a friend or family member. Ex: "Tod really shaned Dave when he stole his girlfriend."

Kirkman; verb; - The inexplicable, uncaring way the universe treats people. Ex: "How can I get mad at a typhoon when it is just so Kirkman."

Also, a new phrase has sprouted. "I really need to talk to my girlfriend about moving in, but that's opening a barn full of walkers."

I'm gonna use these! Nice!

But all fun aside, let's get serious for a moment. When I got into the comic, or graphic novel, or whatever.. I had the flu, and a friend had hooked me up with all 84

issues. So, having nothing to do but sit in bed I read ALL 84 issues in one sitting. I HIGHLY recommend this approach to any new reader out there as, like the characters, you don't get a break from the horror.

One thing that crept into my vision kind of early is that while Rick is the central character the story almost focuses on Carl. He's the one to watch, and the only character you can really have any faith won't get et' soon. I think I saw you comment on this yourself? Anyway, my big question has been that in the comic Carl goes through a hell that can only really happen in the comic media. I have seen a lot of the interviews, Talking Dead, and such, so I know there are 5 billion "child safety" laws that won't let TV Carl go through the things comic Carl has. And because of this I cannot imagine how you will get TV Carl to the same place believably. Any insights you can share?

Kirkman?

You're just going to have to keep watching...

Ok, I saw the letter bitchin' about the Playboy Michonne thing... gotta say, I was excited. Yes, I understand how some people could have an issue here, and no, I won't be buying that issue either. But I still applaud the move for several reasons. People out of the blue know don't realize that Playboy really has more than nudie pics in it. Some of the interviews, President Carter for example, have been awesome. And I remember as a young teen reading some of Stephen King's shorts (under Bachman) there, including the short for "Children of the Corn". But, I'm an older man now and not really wanting a pile of Playboy's in the closet... I'm an artist and have thought about trying to get some stuff published in Playboy because last I checked I could get my stuff under the nose of 8 million subscribers/ newsstand world-wide or some crazy number. Having that many people see my stuff, and get paid to contribute? Hell to the yea! Some day.

And in closing, Kirkman, you know I'm loving what you're doing, comic and TV, and you're the only writer I've ever cursed out loud. Please don't take it personal... but damn it man! What the hell, killing off Dale in such a sucky way! I think Dale was the one man I could relate to philosophically. And I had JUST gotten one of my friends into the show, he says "I am really starting to like that Dale character. I can identify with him..." and blam! I'll never forgive you... keep up the awesome work.

That's kind of how this series works sometimes!

And finally, if you'll allow a shout out... Yo! Thanks Sonya Thompson, Larry Mainland, and Matt Lyda (zombie actors on the show) for hanging with us on Facebook and talking zombie stuff. You're great people. And IronE Singleton for lurking around... "We Love the Walking Dead"

a fan,
Dave Sunhammer

Even the zombie actors have fans! Awesome! How come no one ever gives a shout out to Brian Bockrath?

Thanks again to everyone for helping us get record breaking sales on this issue, for giving a zombie book a chance when the market wasn't ready, and most of all, accepting the fact that I will hashtag long after twitter is over... Skybound owes you a firm handshake.

Yours 'til I die,

-Sina Grace

Boy oh boy! I can't believe issue 100 is in the can. Onward... toward issue 1000! Thanks again everyone!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, Hacks!

Editor Sina Grace here, done with the big Comic-Con/ Walking Dead 100 hurdle. Phew! Both Comic-Con and issue 100 were tremendous successes, and we owe it all to the retailers, fans, and Bockraths of the world!

To be honest, Brian Bockrath had nothing to do with the success of Skybound's summer.

Okay, now the Bockrath thing is getting a little out of hand.

At any rate... fan mail finally did start coming in about Abraham's death, read below. Also: the fan mail for issue 100 was STAGGERING. You all had opinions about Glenn.

Who knew people liked that guy? Wink. Let's dive into the mail!

Kirkman and Crew,

I'm a first timer in the fan letter world so bear with me.

Rob, Robert, Robbie, Roblicious... I'll stick with Roblicious, that's dope.

I tried saying it to him in person. You got a steak for this welt on my face?

First, your writing is gold. That's probably why you have so many awesome books out. These 'fans' that continue to write in letters telling you how 'upset' they are with your writing or how 'disappointed' they are with how you respond to letter need to switch to the Sunday funnies and stay out of the grownups books. Obviously you don't answer questions for your own reasons (whatever they may be) which is perfectly acceptable.

Secondly, I'm almost wetting myself waiting for issue 100. Please build a time machine, come get me right now (it's 2:21pm on June 20) and take me to the future so I can read it.

And last but not least, kill Glenn. He's gone soft.

Done.

How's THAT for service?

Until next time,
Trevin Lohr
Felton, DE

P.S. It is now 2:25 and you haven't retrieved me. Either time travel doesn't exist in your lifetime, or I'm just not that important. Either way, bummer.

Would it be glib to say that you're not that important?

Thanks for helping Robert decide which character to kill.

It was a real nail biter until this email came in... so, anyone still upset over that whole thing... write in to Trevin.

I was really disappointed to see that you had Rick leaving to head back to the Hilltop knowing that an attack had to be imminent from Negan. It seems so stupid as to be implausible and seems to be written solely for the purpose of leaving the people left behind as more vulnerable. After all Rick has been through It seems so stupid as to not be believable. There is no way anyone in their right mind would be venturing out at that particular moment. It's taking me out of my willing suspension of disbelief in the whole story. In my mind Rick would be preparing the community for an attack. Maybe he might send out a messenger to the Hilltop in the dead of night so they would not be detected but not leave in a van in such a visible manor during the day with other people critical to defending their community. I've been a fan of the series since issue #1 but this development really left me stupefied. I'm so aggravated with the way you are writing Rick's actions here and the stupidity of it that I have lost all interest in him and at this point and would just like to see him killed. Sorry but just a really poor direction for the story at this critical juncture in my humble opinion. It just doesn't ring true at all. Just really really hate it - it's so stupid. Please keep your characters actions plausible!

Bryan Tollerene

This issue kind of points out that Rick had no clue Negan's crew was as huge going into that kind of journey. Does Rick

get a little headstrong? Yes. Leaders can't always make the right decisions.

Thanks, Sina. I'll be the first to admit, maybe I didn't do enough to support the decision and clarify it. Rick's thinking was that "if" Negan's group was strong enough to stage another attack the least likely time for that to happen would be immediately after getting their asses handed to them like they did. So that was the safest time to make the journey. Also, he left Andrea behind just in case--and she seemed to do a bang up job defending the city, so that was a smart decision on his part. Either way: sorry that this turn in the story bugs you so much. I hope when you read the full arc it will make a lot more sense to you.

So is this even still a zombie book or what? No character has been killed by one since issue 83! Over a year in real time. I know Rick said that the zombies were a "manageable threat," but that's kind of ridiculous. I feel like this comic is turning into standard post-apocalyptic wasteland fare, with zombies only tossed in to add to the scenery.

Jason N.
Brooklyn, NY

I don't know that it's been a year in real time... maybe what--three or four months, max?

Real time, Sina... it's been over a year since 83 came out. Sheesh.

I'm proud of the fact that a character hasn't died from a zombie bite in 17 issues. It doesn't mean that's not going to happen anymore... and the zombies are still a threat, for sure, it just means the book can stand on the strength of its characters without it being a zombie kill of the month story. To be honest, I hadn't realized it had reached a full 17 issues... pretty cool.

Maybe you'll all forget just how dangerous zombies are... and then something really horrible will happen and it'll be that much more intense and shocking because there's been a lack of it for so long... just saying....

Kirkman and Co.

How goes it? I know, I know... I've been SLACK MASTER on the letters for the past 8 months and I apologize for this. I'm no Andrew J. Shaw exactly - that guy has letters in just about every book with a letters page - but I do fancy myself a true Letter Hack and I have missed writing in. Although I'm sure that Letter Hacks has no shortage of material to fill the back pages of your book each month I still feel obligated to write in and give my two cents (sometimes four) whenever I can. Being that the wife is introducing my step daughter to The NeverEnding Story for the first time as I type this I was able to catch up on some comics (finally)... So here we go

So Abraham is done... WTF?? I know we aren't supposed to get attached to the characters (issue 100 has me nervous) but I honestly feel that there was some wasted potential with Abraham (a very interesting character, at least he was)... I feel as if he was killed off TOO SOON, before he was able to make a huge impact on the overall story. I will concede that I haven't re-read the series since he joined us (so maybe he DID have a major role to play at some point and I have just forgotten) but I just feel that while the execution was flawless last issue (the arrow through the eye was pretty sick) I'm just not sure what the point was in introducing him in the first place only to kill him now, a precursor to the real slaughter (I assume) next month.

Who said you're not supposed to get attached to the characters?! That's the exact opposite of what we're after! Get attached--get REALLY attached.

And Abraham, I feel, was a pretty important character in the life of the series but I do agree that there was a lot of potential left untapped in him... but to me, that's no reason to keep a character around, it will just make the loss that much more tangible for the characters who are still around.

This is your World so the rules are yours of course but still... I'm a little disappointed you went that route. I feel Abraham had a lot to offer the story, and in the end it turned out to be a catalyst for Eugene to finally land Rosita (maybe) and who knows? Maybe THAT in and of itself will lead somewhere... Poor Eugene, I can't help but feel

sorry for the poor wretch.

Oh! Their couple name would be Eusita!

Now the AFTERMATH of Abraham getting pwn3d was a different story... The Calm before the Storm of Issue 100, FTW. The Memorial Service, the exchange between Rosita and Eugene (and later Rosita and Holly), Carl's "matter-of-fact" attitude and proud pragmatism... It was all great (especially Carl's reaction to Sophia leaving) but I do feel the price was steep... First you take away Axel (ya feel me?) and now Big A? Say it ain't so!!!!

It is what it is... farewell Abraham, at least your death looked cool on paper.

I'm going to do my best to get all the covers next month, however my comic store guy basically told me "no way". I accept his challenge.

Do you only have ONE comic store guy in your neighborhood?

Yeah, what the heck... you couldn't get him to hold a set for you? What's that guy doing?

And now for something COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

I take it you all have played the official board game, right (the one based on the comic, not the show)? I have it (have had it for months) but it intimidates me so I haven't played it... If you did play it, how did you like it? Be honest now... I already own the thing (thanks Barbie!) so it isn't like you have to sell it to me. I would like to play a Walking Dead themed party to include the game but I have to TEACH OTHERS how to play... Assuming you have tried it out, do you love it?

Robert's played it, I've played it, Director of Business Development Shawn Kirkham has played it... and we all love it.

Yeah, I will say that it is pretty intimidating because I'm not the biggest board gamer... I play a ton of Candy Land, the occasional Chutes and Ladders... and I love me some Monopoly... Risk... Stratego... but on the surface the TWD board game seems REALLY complicated, but once you're into it... it's totally great and really fun, and not nearly as complicated as it seems.

Enjoy killing off Glenn you bastards,

Cam Stylez

P.S. I hope I'm wrong about that... make it so.

Yikes! A little eerie that you called it!

Bah! I basically spoiled it almost a year ago in the letters column. Remember that? That was a fun game. In hindsight I feel like it put Glenn at the top of the "death possibility" list, but it was fun nonetheless and maybe it'll get people to start reading the letters columns more closely.

Mr. Kirkman,

What do you have against right eyes?

Kyle Genoni
Pleasanton, CA

That's Robert's monocle eye, natch! So of course he'd go after that eye in all his writing!

Dwight's LEFT eye is all messed up!! I'm not in a total rut!

Hey guys,

First off, and I am sure you get enough of this, I would like to say BRAVO on this amazing piece of work (comic and TV). I got hooked on the show from the beginning just because of my love for Zombies. A buddy of mine wouldn't let me continue the show though unless I read the comic. Since I started that, I have been completely hooked on TWD.

What I really want to get to are some questions I am very surprised have not come up yet in the Letter Hacks, but here they go.

- Focusing on the TV show, WHERE IS RICK'S HATCHET!!!!? Obviously we have the Colt, which has been Rick's main gun, but in the comic, the hatchet he found at the farm in issue #2 has been a major weapon for him. Will we ever see Rick get this in the show? Screw the machetes in the show, I want the hatchet!

There's a reason this hasn't been addressed yet- it's not THAT important. That being said, Robert, do you know if there will be any hatchet fun in season three?

There's a lot of various bladed weapons fun in season 3. Stay tuned for any hatchet news!

- Do you ever think Rick will make his way back to the prison to see if he could find the bodies of his wife and baby daughter? This way he could properly lay them to rest.

We've sort of addressed this (and your next question), Rick's pretty sure his wife became walker food.

Yeah, it's just not practical to go find a bunch of dried-up bones. ASSUMING THEY ACTUALLY DIED--WHAT?!! (joking, I swear)

- Kind of going off the last question, it was never shown that Lori and the baby were "brained", couldn't that mean there is potential that they are both walkers?

Nah. That place was overrun with walkers. They were definitely zombie kibbles. Sorry.

Anyways, keep up the great work! I am look very forward to Season 3 (GOING TO BE EPIC) and of course, Issue # 100 that comes out next week.

Sincerely,

Mark Zubal
Scranton, PA

From the sneak peek AMC unveiled of season three, it truly will be epic.

Dear Robert and Sina.

I fucking love your comic. I know you've heard this before, but still it's awesome!

I'd like to say so much more, but I don't have words. So, let's start with questions!

1) I'm worried man, seriously. In the comic, 2 years have passed, and the series take longer to make. Carl's actor will grow up before it happens in the comic !!... So if this happens, Are you going to change Carl's actor ? or will you kill him before it happens?, or... What will you do !?

This seems like a good problem to have: a show so successful it's on the air for many years and an actor so good he'd be hard to replace? Chandler's a short dude, they'll just draw more freckles on his face if he starts getting all ... manly.

Or not... the shortest answer I can give here is that yes, overall, time will pass faster in the show than in the comic... and Carl will more than likely get older on the show.

The show and the comic are different and will continue to be different... and that's okay. Doesn't mean the show will go in a completely different direction... just means things will continue to be slightly altered... like it always has been.

2) Full-colored 100th comic ?. I know, I know. You've received a lot of requests about colored comic books but... c'mon man ! it's number 100 !

Nah.

Nope.

3) I can't stand to see Carl like that, He has suffered so much ! and if you kill him, the fans will complain so much about it. But please he deserves a rest of that world full of suffering.

You need to stop worrying about Carl so much and start worrying about why you care for Carl so much.

Carl is quite possibly the strongest character in the series... he handles this stuff better than anyone... which should be terrifying. He's got a lot of life left in him... I think.

4) Eugene get laid with Rosita ? I mean, they both know how much they need it !

I've already asked! All I got was a dismissive chuckle. We'll just have to read and see!

Stay tuned.

5) Why did you let Sophia die in the series ?

To show that there are real stakes in the show.

Sure, and it was a really good idea that came up in the writers room and "that didn't happen in the comic" in my opinion is not a good reason to scrap a great idea.

6) Is T-Dog a replacement of Tyresee ?

NOPE.

He is a completely different character.

Directly from Colombia !
and keep up the good work.

Felipe Molano

Fans from around the world! Wool!

Thanks for reading, and come back in one month to see how Dwight may help Rick prevent another meeting with Lucille.

Please continue reading through for a preview of a graphic novel that I wrote and drew, called NOT MY BAG. If you like slick black and white artwork, and my terrible puns, then you simply must order this book! It comes out in October.

Best,

-Sina Grace

Wait, keep reading for WHAT?! HOW did this make it in?! Sina... who did this book, wait... oh... okay.

All joking aside. You guys all LOVE, Sina... right? He really livens up these letters columns and NOT MY BAG is a passion project of his that he's been working on for years. So do the guy a solid and read this preview, and if you like it... let your retailer know you want this book.

Sina is a super talented guy in his own right, I'm absolutely thrilled to know that he's branching out past Lil' Depressed Boy (which he draws) which you should all also be reading. I'm very happy for him... and more on that next issue.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Letter Hacks!

New editor Sean Mackiewicz stepping into this column for the first time – and, man, did Sina leave me holding the bag on this one. Every other email in my first couple weeks concerned WALKING DEAD #100...and Glenn. And Lucille. And Glenn’s brains.

How about we select these letters Negan-style? Eenie, meanie, miney, moe...

Good job so far, Sean.

Dear Robert,

I hope this letter finds you well.

That was a lie. I actually hope this letter finds you with Tuberculosis. I hope when this letter finds you, you are lying in a pool of your own sweat as the TB slowly courses through your lungs, and your only two thoughts are, “Why didn’t I just get that TB vaccine?” and “I shouldn’t have eaten that spaghetti bolognese for lunch.”

I hope this letter (after a long day of contemplating whether to talk to you about what’s been on its mind) decides to go to your house and knock on your door. Then, as it knocks on your door, it realizes it’s slightly ajar; at which point it goes in unannounced but says something akin to, “Robert? Kirkman? Robert Kirkman? It’s me, Letter!” Then when there is no response, it decides to wander throughout your house only to find you collapsed on the kitchen floor lying in a pool of your own sweat and spaghetti cough residue from a mild to mild severe case of Tuberculosis.

Who do you think you are? Huh? Seriously, who do you think you are? Do you think you’re some cool guy? Some kind of really cool guy? Please! You’re not a cool guy! You know who’s a cool guy? Iceman from Top Gun. You know who else is a cool guy? Benny “The Jet” Rodriguez from The Sandlot. You know who else? Brad Pitt in Seven.

You sir, are NOT any of those guys. You don’t have a fighter jet; you don’t know how to get out of a pickle; and you certainly don’t know what’s in that goddamn box.

You’re the antithesis of a cool guy. You’re like the Aqualad of Young Justice. You’re like the TI-80s of all TI calculators. You are the stupid murder storyline in season two of Friday Night Lights (he should have gone to jail).

I can’t believe you killed Glenn off in the 100th issue. What were you thinking?

“Hi, I’m Robert Kirkman. I created a really good comic character who basically carried my book for over eight years and then decided to kill him in the 100th issue. I like vienna sausages and Diet Rite. I also love sabotaging my own empire by destroying the heart of the entire comic! You know what I could really go for right now? A bag of dicks. I’d love to have me a big bag of dicks. Yeah. I could really go for a large duffel filled with dicks right about now.”

That’s probably what you said. I’m fairly sure that’s what you said. I’m like 96% sure you said that. Yeah. 96%.

Foolish move, Kirkman. You better watch your back from now on, because I am gonna get you. Don’t even THINK about leaving your house! I bought three things yesterday to destroy you:

- 1) a walkie talkie
- 2) a sniper rifle
- 3) the other walkie talkie

I’m coming for you. I’m coming for you fast and hard, Kirkman.

Sincerely,

Steven Yeun
Los Angeles, CA

P.S. I would LOVE an autograph, I have enclosed my mailing address! Thanks!

Well, Steven, if you don’t mind me calling you that, I don’t know what your profession is, I wouldn’t presume to know more about you than can be assumed from the way you’ve written this letter. Reading into this, the only job I feel certain you could hold down, is that of “asshole.” Yeah, that’s right, you seem like a real top notch professional asshole. So being the asshole that you are, you probably don’t really understand the ins and outs of quality writing like I do, being a professional writer myself. So I’m not going to waste my time trying to tell you why killing Glenn at this time is such a brilliant move on my part as your asshole brain would probably not be able to comprehend it.

All that said, after seeing the portrayal of Glenn on the television show, and the stellar performance by an actor whose name I can’t seem to recall (ever, really--it’s quite strange) for me at least, the comic book Glenn just became a pale impression of the TV show character, so I figured, why waste my time telling stories with this guy anymore, when that real dude is making the comic character look so bad.

So I offed him... blame that actor guy... if I could remember his name right now, I’d tell you to write to him. But I don’t... and I never do. So I can’t. Sorry.

What a lovely series you have going. Truly. But that’s not what this is about.

The letters in the back of the issues are insightful, entertaining, and yes, sometimes obnoxious. So, you can’t help but respond to ones you find annoying with something sarcastic. I get it. I also know it’s hard to keep tight-lipped about upcoming events in your series, but did you have to ruin issue #100 with revealing in issue #88 that Glenn gets killed? I know you think we’re dummies, and we are. Seriously. Thank you for making us feel dumb. And yeah, you addressed this in a later issue, but even then, you played it off like it was nothing. I assume you realize you had messed up, and were trying to cover your tracks. Well, you didn’t. [That shit gets people killed in your series!] And it ruined the impact of Glenn getting killed. Emotional? Yeah. Surprising? Not when you know it’s going to happen because the creator has already told you. And you kept acting like issue #100 would be a big deal for us readers and a major turning point in the story, but it was only a big deal for you and the others who work on it. Congrats on issue #100! Whoo! But you ruined it for the readers. Show some common sense and professionalism next time and edit yourself. I’m sure big things are ahead and major changes are coming, but we don’t need to know specifics until it happens.

Thanks from the Volunteer State

- Rebecca

If we really knew what goes on a year in advance, that would save me the time from texting Robert Sunday nights for scripts and him calling me a Republican. Also, everyone dies in the end. EVERYONE.

Well, first of all, I didn’t slip that in on accident... I did that on purpose, as kind of a joke. And you may have suspected that was a spoiler, but you didn’t know it was until it actually WAS. Does that make sense? It was a vague mention that he had died, it wasn’t like I came out and said “Hey, Glenn dies in issue 100!” Not the kind of thing I’ll be doing ever again, but I thought it would be a fun little tease for the few readers who actually pour through these letters columns. I’m sorry if you weren’t amused.

To all the folks working so hard to tell a story...

Thank you. Thanks for being a different breed of entertainer.

Thank you, Sina - for the gender confusion, for the pithy comments, for the back and forth, and for doing more than “fanning.”

Thank you, Rus - you never get credit for making words have

such a wonderful sound to them.

Thank you, Charlie, for your style. I hope the powers that be decide to cut you a break. While I have certainly loved having a new issue every three weeks, it felt a bit rushed at times (more darkened-out faces, a bit less detail). I hope that things get a bit easier when it is back to four weeks and you can shine as you have so many times, so consistently. You're a workhorse. That goes for you too, Cliff. The tones make the depth.

Thank you, Robert, for your vision, your pace, your characterization, and the ability to tell a broad story with such deft focus.

I had an internal build-up to the 100th issue that matched the external build-up. While the issue had its moments, it was still just another issue in a long line of solid storytelling. I, therefore, wish that the build-up was not as omnipresent. A car giveaway was cool but what did it add? I imagine running the obstacle course was amazing. I understand the need of people - Kirkman? Skybound? - to hype things enough to sell more issues, get more fans, grow the buzz...you've done it before (No Way Out teasers, etc).

But Lucille was a BAT? You made a special hype on the walkingdead100 website for a BAT? You made a T-shirt for a BAT? That was ridiculous. That was idiotic. That was just plain stupid. I hope that's the first and last time I have that thought in my head. You don't have to do that again, OK? You can tease if you must but tease with meaning. I'm literally shaking my head at this one.

Thanks again.

Scott Schaefer

P.S. I take back what I said earlier. Can't wait for the big reveal in #102 of the tease in #101 saying "Beware of Bob" that Bob is a slightly used utility knife. SPOILER ALERT. Stay sane.

Scott Schaefer, inventor of the sucker punch. I've always wanted to meet that guy.

Yeah, I was totally convinced this was going to be a positive letter (and therefore wouldn't get printed) and then WHAM, instantly printable! Yeesh.

Anyway, Lucille is goddamn awesome and that teaser was totally cool and the fact that it turned out to be a bat was cool as hell and you're wrong (does that work? Or did I just sound like a jerk). Look, we tried something new, and you didn't like it. Hopefully we only did that once over the course of 100 issues... I think that's a pretty good track record.

Dear Hacks,

Oh cool, so for issue #100 a ruthless sociopath who runs a community of bloodthirsty mercenaries brutally kills a beloved character in front of a powerless Rick?

That totally reminds me of this comic I used to read, it's called THE WALKING DEAD. There was this FANTASTIC story arc when this bad motherfucker with an eyepatch leads a band of savages to kill a beloved character in front of this guy, Rick, who's like totally helpless.

It was great! I mean, it kinda got weird when the writer started repeating himself, but it's hard to hold it against him since he brought me so many years of fulfilling reading and delightful character development.

You should read it some time. Or re-read it. If you think about it, it's the same thing. Weird!

Love,
Flip Sasser

PS. Sina, if you print this, can you not do that thing where you prompt Robert to comment like he actually proof-reads the columns and is like, "Oh man, Sina said I should chime in here, gee, I'd better; I probably wouldn't have if he hadn't penciled that in"? I find it to be weird. Still with the love.

Flip Sasser, your mother named you well.

Oh, no prompting for me to respond and yet I'm STILL responding... how did that happen?! Hey, maybe I actually DO read all these letters. MAYBE, just MAYBE I even read the ones that don't get printed.

Guys, I'm a sell out hack, okay? No doubt about it. Have you seen the lunch box? The T-shirts? The Obstacle course? The board game? I can't hide that fact, all I can do is try to make sure each product is as cool as possible and at the same time, stay focused on the comic, continue reading the mail and do my damndest to keep writing stories that are cool and don't repeat themselves...

Oh, crap.

So anyway, I'm not going to sit here and say hey--there are NO similarities whatsoever to Negan and The Governor... there are, because this kind of world would narrow out the types of people who would SURVIVE.... so yeah, there are similarities, but I promise these stories are going to be very different, beyond the fact that The Governor used a sword on Tyreese and Negan used a bat on Glenn... this story is more about evolution... it's about changing Rick over time and having him learn new ways to deal with these situations. The Governor was a threat, he got his ass kicked, The hunters were a threat, he kicked their asses... and now here comes

Negan, who is bigger and more threatening than The Governor ever was. And this story is going to hit a lot of different beats than the Woodbury storyline. So stick with it, you'll see... or y'know, don't. Maybe in a few years you'll hear that it turned out awesome and you can dive back in, or you'll hear that it was total crap and be vindicated. Either way.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to approve the press release for these Walking Dead Saltine Crackers...

OK. Speed round time...

Dear Letter Hacks

SPLAUGG!

M. Calder

To Robert Kirkman, that sick twisted genius,

Walking Dead #100 broke my heart and angered me more than any comic I've ever read. I've never wanted to see a character die as much as I do Negan. Please make this happen...soon.

Dan Kippin

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

My thoughts on #100, in sophisticated haiku form.

You fucking bastard.
You evil fucking bastard.
Please don't ever change.

Yours since #1,

Ross Greenwalt
Tulsa, OK

Why did you kill off Glenn????????????? He was my favorite!! If you kill off Maggie and Michonne, you'll be sleeping with one eye open for the rest of your life. Now, Sophia has lost another dad. That is cruel, you heartless person. Me and my friend are furious at you right now.
-Jasmine, 15, Canada

Dear Mr. Kirkman:
Fuck you.
-J.T.S.Wallraven

I don't think I can read your comic anymore. It's just misery all the time. The world sucks enough and I don't need to pay once a month to see characters I care about have their brains beaten in so you can sell more copies of your book. Try to write interesting story lines and not rely on the shock value of killing characters off to sell books.

J. Forsythe

Kirk-Man,
I just read 100 and have two only things to say.
You got balls. Negan 2012.
JakeN'Bake

Kirkman,

I bought every variant cover for issue 100. I don't know exactly what your cut of that will be, but please go to Arby's and order the Three Cheese and Bacon combo (with curly fries, of course) so I can tell my friends I bought Robert Kirkman lunch. Congratualtions, by the way. Seems like just yesterday you were telling us your goal was to reach issue 25!

Sean Hiatt
Warrensburg, MO

LAPD—

In the event of any wrongdoing to THE WALKING DEAD staff, your investigation would be best served starting with the above list of suspects.

So, that's all this month, folks. Keep on living!

-Sean

Thanks so much for writing in everyone! It really is such a huge deal for me to make it to issue 100, this series means so much to me and it's been a huge honor getting to this milestone and your opinions, both positive and negative are always ALWAYS welcome. Charlie, Cliff, Rus, Sina, Sean and I all appreciate you taking the time to write in and thank you for helping us reach this milestone.

And hey--issue 103 in a month! We're only 97 issues away from 200!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Letter Hacks!

Sean Mackiewicz here. Now that "Something to Fear" is over, the status quo has been reset, everything's back to normal and...wait. This Rick/Negan beef is FAR from being cooked.

Yeesh, man... yeesh. That's your opener? Okay... well, I guess it's good to start the bar low. Let's answer some mail!

Dear Robert,

Please don't allow Negan to slide his cock down Rick's throat.

Sincerely,
John Camara

When I first read your letter, John, I thought, who IS this sick fuck? And then I got the rest of this issue's script...and know that you're not the only one out there.

Negan made good on his threat from issue 100 in this very issue... but FIGURATIVELY! For now at least... wocka wocka!

You bastards, how can you say you're not going to make Daryl a character in THE WALKING DEAD comic series and then have the cover art for something to fear part five have a guy with a crossbow on it. Issue 101 had no one with a crossbow anywhere in it. That was a dirty nasty trick. Stop teasing the fans like that. Either put him in or not. Maybe I'm not being patient enough. I wrote a letter once that did not get published and that was when I had nice things to say. But now I'm pissed I was really looking forward for Daryl to be introduced to us. I want to see Daryl in the comics NOW, if you don't heed to my wishes I will hate you forever. Go die now.

Sincerely,
Michael James of Standish, Maine

P.S. By the way I'm in a wheelchair and I can run faces over.

One quick question, why no disabled zombies or disabled survivors rolling and hobbling around? That would be cool. Wheelchair people have souls too dammit.

Robert and my faces are both about six feet off the ground, so you better have some monster treads. But I agree: wheelchair people, the disabled, do indeed have souls. Survival skills? Maybe not so much.

Maybe. We'll likely never know... or will we? Now, onto the Daryl issue. By now, you know that the crossbow wielding fellow on the cover to issue 101 was not Daryl from the TV show but was indeed our new villain character Dwight, who killed Abraham, with his crossbow. And he WAS in issue 101 even if he wasn't wielding his crossbow at the time (he was tied up, cut him some slack).

Sexy day guys,

I dig all of the delicious work that has been put in these comics over the years. You have something truly special here. (I'm about 3 years old in dog years, so I'm qualified to say that.) Before I started THE WALKING DEAD, I wasn't much of a reader; but I can honestly say now, I have retired my old ways of reading the stories on cereal boxes to focus 100% on the possible sexy stories coming in the future. *Exciting dolphin clap!*

I have a few questions, so I hope you don't mind answering them:

1. The beef jerky stroganoff from previous issues. Who was the genius that came up with this? Robert!? Whoever it was, I thank you and hate you at the same time. Those are two very, very delicious foods and you have combined them to create an orgy of gargantuan proportions. I'm eternally hungry. It sounds almost as good as macaroni & cheese with Spam. (P.S. Have you made this?)

I thought a really crappy dish to make in the apocalypse would be Stroganoff made with beef jerky instead of hamburger... I don't know if it's really ever been done before, I'm sure someone has tried it. I just figured jerky would last and boxed stroganoff is essentially just a dust pouch, right? I now want someone to make it and see if it's edible.

2. Now that Glenn has had his face smashed in, when can we expect another Asian-American to join the team? I've been having glenndrawals :(

When Maggie's baby pops, that count?

And don't forget KAL at the hilltop, the guy throws a mean spear--he's awesome!

3. Jesus is very ninja-like. I haven't seen a cooler ninja since Chris Farley. May I ask how Jesus obtained these skills? Did he just become experienced over time by fighting the dead? If you can't tell me now, are you planning to tell this in the upcoming issues?

Yes.

Thanks for the gorgeous readings,

Lupe Phillips, Jr.

P.S. Nothing cool has ever happened in my life. Print this and I'll send you my best goat.

I'mma go make room in the warehouse and get this spit set up.

Holy smokes--it's GOAT TIME! I've always wanted a goat! I'm going to feed it tin cans!

Dear Kirkman and co.

This past issue really affected me. I, like so many others I've heard of, were sitting there reading the issue in a pile of grief, dreading yet unwilling to stop as we flipped the pages through the first issue of THE WALKING DEAD I've not dared to read twice.

I've been thinking these past months about why this issue had such an impact on me. Why a simple death of a 'sidekick' could keep me up nights. Well, there's a lot to this answer, so I should just get to it.

How often do you see a lovable Asian sidekick? Well...Pretty often. But Glenn was different. He was what they so often label in Asia as an ABC (American Born Chinese). And while he is obviously not Chinese, I'm sure the majority of people would more willingly gloss over that detail rather than deal with changing the catchy acronym.

Growing up an ABC, I didn't have many ethnic role models for myself in American media. And this isn't to say that I believe Glenn was intended to be an ethic role model. But that's exactly the point—his lack of obvious representation of a foreign ethnic group is in itself the most accurate portrayal I could have ever hoped for of an ABC (although I am, in fact, a Canadian). He was a 'nice-guy', looking

for some love who, and when faced with unthinkable situations, reacted with a healthy mix of fear and courage. He wasn't stereotypically "book smart" or "honorable." He was just a pizza delivery guy who did some petty crime.

This nuanced character model is something I've been searching for my whole life. And placing him in this environment of societal breakdown added a crucial dimension to the mix.

In university, I was given an opportunity to spend a summer in the former killing fields of Rwanda. I received an internship at a Genocide Memorial Center that gave me the chance to spend time interviewing survivors of the genocide for research purposes. Many of my coworkers were survivors themselves. And, time after time, as they began to open up their experiences to me, I was painted a bleak picture of humanity. I was placed before me a world where, for 100 days, the social structure that keeps us in check disappeared overnight. Doctors, teachers, preachers, and all other ordinary folk alike were driven to make the impossible choices so often referred to in THE WALKING DEAD. Many decent people turned into mass murderers, serial rapists, and militant leaders overnight. It affected me dearly—as this was where my slight obsession with the darker side of the human condition began.

In THE WALKING DEAD, I found in Glenn a character that, being placed in a similar world to that of a genocide, ended up finding, and sticking to an amiable purpose—doing his best for a community that needed him and a family that loved him.

And no matter how fucking shitfaced angry I was when he died, I'm in retrospect grateful he was not spared. Using him too long as a lovable token would have made him into just that, a token. But he died, unjustly, and might I add quite vividly. He was not given special treatment. And in a world like that, no one is. Especially the nice guys.

Anyways, this is more than anything just a big old thank you for bringing this character into my life. And while I am still pessimistic about humanity as a whole, I at least know there is hope for myself.

Adam
Toronto, Ontario

P.S. I also may or may not have loved having an Asian male character with a non-Asian girlfriend. Mostly to shove in my girlfriend's face and say "See! We're not the only ones!!"

I'm sure she appreciates it too. I'm not sure, I haven't asked her.

Also, please make their baby cute.

Charlie, make with a cute baby.

Thanks for writing this letter, Adam. Glenn has a special place in my heart as well, I only hope keeping him around for 99 issues makes up for his death. I recognize the importance of having an Asian American prominently featured in the cast due to all the mail I've gotten on the subject since the book started. Thankfully, he's still alive and well in the TV show and portrayed by that amazing actor whose name I just can't... seem... to place... right now...

Oh, well...

Your book has gone pretty sour. I don't know if it's from you becoming a millionaire, or just a lack of creativity, but your book is getting pretty bland nowadays. Ish hundo (yes, I just typed that) was no surprise. I honestly thought you would have done something a lot more significant than kill off boring old Glenn (Ooohhh he has a baby! Wait, haven't I read this before?). I think it might be time for someone else to take the reins for a month or two while you deal with all that money.

cough
hack
weeze

Sina

Justin Birkhimer
Bethel Island, CA

Faith in humanity meter: dropping...

Little does Justin know...I don't have a lot of time for writing, due to all the time spent swimming in my money bin. Sina's too busy flying my plane, and me and my three nephews go on a lot of adventures with the maid's granddaughter. (At least, I THINK she's her granddaughter...) BLATHERING BLATHERSKITE!!

Kirkman and Sina,

I've got to say I'm one of your recent readers that read 1-101

in a week...Now I'm reading THE RISE OF THE GOVERNOR. I've got a few questions and some ideas.

How well do the zombies handle water? Do they float or sink? Would a river carry them away? Would they just walk into a river if someone was on a boat attracting them?

It would cause them to rapidly decay if they stayed submerged for an extended period of time. By now they would have expelled all gasses and they would sink. Depends on the strength of the current, I'd say mostly yes. Probably, while I do not subscribe to the idea of smart or evolving zombies, I would say that there can be some zombies that are more intelligent, or rather, more driven than others... so some might, some might not.

I ask these questions because I have an idea for clearing out zombies. When I was in basic training they had these artillery simulators powered by compressed air or propane. These simulators are much louder than a gunshot and can be heard for a very long distance. These simulators are not very large either around the size of a large cooler. In the DC area they have Duck Tours. The tours use fully restored WWII amphibious military personnel carriers called DUKW. So my plan would be to look around Quantico or Fort Belvoir for one of these simulators. Then mount it on a DUKW. Clear two widely spaced paths to the Potomac River and just drive along slowly booming all the way. With its 7 foot sides, front prow, and high ground clearance I doubt even a herd could stop one. Once your reach the river drive on in and drop anchor in the middle and boom away for a few days. The river will wash away any roamers that wade in. Do this monthly and pretty soon DC is zombie free. I just wouldn't want to be the guys downstream.

It's too bad Abraham is dead as he's the only one I could see plausibly suggesting the artillery simulator. It would still be really cool to incorporate a DUKW. Maybe Negan has one back at his base.

Also, is Barrington House a real place? I was looking for it and the only hits I got for Barrington House was a B&B in North Carolina. Was it inspired by Mount Vernon? Mount Vernon would be an awesome location to hole up at.

Grant Autry

"Atta, boy!" Letter of the Month! Let it be known going forward that Letter Hacks is science friendly. Thoughtful, innovative techniques to combat the zombie menace are always welcome.

I zoned out after answering all his questions. What'd he say?! KIDDING! Barrington House is fiction, but it is based on those old time estates like Mount Vernon that are turned into tourist attractions. Where's the Biltmore House? North Carolina? Places like that.

Robert,

I was thinking this week something like, "If only the INVINCIBLE series could have the humanity of TWD, and TWD the energy of INVINCIBLE!"...I figure it may be worth it to actually switch pencil artists—Charlie Adlard for Ryan Ottley, and vice versa—for an issue; like they did once in the early days of Image! I think Jim Lee did Savage Dragon, Rob Liefeld did Shadowhawk, etc. This issue was great, but really just another issue.

Andrew J. Shaw

Know what happened after Jim Lee drew Savage Dragon? Erik Larsen redrew that issue because he didn't want his run interrupted. And with Charlie only three issues away from hitting 100(!) consecutive issues, I don't imagine you'll get your wish anytime soon.

Also, I like the fact that both books are pretty different and the great artists that do both books (who I won't bother naming, phooey) are a big part of that. I think THE WALKING DEAD often times has a ton of energy and INVINCIBLE often times has a ton of heart, so basically, what I'm saying is "Suck it, Andrew J. Shaw!"

Turn the page and check out the preview of Skybound's newest title: CLONE! Written by David Schulner and illustrated by Juan Jose Ryp and Felix Serrano, it hits stands 11/14, the same day as the next issue of THE WALKING DEAD. Pick it up!

Sean

CLONE?! I'm so there! That book looks A-MAZE-ING! Dazzling! Woo!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Letter Hacks!

Sean here. I was almost stampeded by a zombie horde at NYCC last week and now I officially feel like “one of you.” Thanks goes to all of you that stopped by the Skybound booth and said what’s up. Except for Michael Rooker. That dude dropped an anarchy bomb when he swung through after THE WALKING DEAD Season 3 panel. One of our booth workers may or may not have stink palmed him.

HA! I can’t follow that! Letters!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

While I have loved nearly everything you have done I’ve been supporting you since BATTLE POPE and was there to anxiously pre-order issue #1 of TWD. For the record, I knew it would be a hit the moment I read it. I have made two hour roundtrips for years just to get new issues of BATTLE POPE, TWD, INVINCIBLE, etc. (Hang in there, there’s a point to all of this cred building.) A few months after TWD came out, I even drove all the way to Texas to get an original page and meet the former artist who shall not be named., but having said all of this, I seriously must question your choice on the direction of issue #102. What? You were probably expecting to me to moan about Glenn getting his skull crushed in. Hell no! Fuck Glenn! (I’m secretly crying inside.) What I am questioning is your choice to hire an editor named Sean Mackiewicz. I’ve known this Mackiewicz family you speak of and every last one of them is a godless commie. If you’re not careful, before you know it, strong characters like Rick and Michonne will be secretly edited to be mindless followers only good for bowing to their communist overlord Negan. Oh shit! It’s already happening...

Sincerely,
godless commie Thomas Mackiewicz

Thomas, you’re about to become an unperson. More perogies for me at Christmas, sucka!

So far, this is like the best letters column we’ve ever done.

Great job printing Steven’s letter. It was both hilarious/sick. Also I live in Philly and unfortunately we have a football coach who’s been repeating himself (as one reader accused Mr. Kirkman of) for 14 seasons. Not once has he offered any explanations for his repeated blunders other than to say, “I gotta do a better job.” How refreshing was it to read an eloquent explanation from the top guy for a particular course of action. Kudos on connecting with your audience. And remember every gripe about offing Glenn is a testament to your superb character development. Umm OK, I think that’s enough gushing. Long time comic fan, first time I chose to write in. Here’s hoping it makes it to print (feel free to edit huge chunks) and if it does also hoping Andy Reid is as big a fan as I am.

Keep Writing,
Rasheed Williams
Philly

A chance to talk sports and leave Robert speechless? Done. If Andy Reid were in THE WALKING DEAD, let’s just say he would still be kicking around after 100 issues, while his community was doomed by poor decisions and clock mismanagement. Also, go Pats!

I honestly don’t even know who Andy Reid is.

Congratulations, team, I’m back! I was wandering from the group for months but have now found my way back to the site. I was lost due to disparaging dialogue, anti-climactic action, the book seemingly taking a back seat to the show (HUGE NO-NO!), and a round-about, seen-it-before plot. Hey, I get it, we all become a little bit bored with the things we’ve been doing for years. This goes for both sides - the receiver and the giver. I’ve been lumbering with you since issue #30 and haven’t stopped. Needless to say, I was getting a bit tired. I was also resenting that it seemed as time went on more time went into Letter Hacks than the story.

Okay... back to work...

I’ve re-read the entire series in three sittings and I gotta say I miss when the people getting into Hacks seemed like family that I wanted to pay attention to: the large font drew me in, only one page (front and back), and somewhat intelligent responses to the stories are what made me want to stick around. Then it tuned into a bombardment of stupidity about “why this?”, “why that?”, and “how dare you?!” bullshit. Here is why: BECAUSE THAT’S HOW THE STORY IS WRITTEN!! Putting

up with the cry-baby fanboy shit for three pages - three pages of which took longer to read than the actual comic (HUGE NO-NO!) began to wear me down. I was losing faith in TWD as a whole. The story and the fans were becoming watered down. I used to save TWD to read last of my three monthly titles. Then it became the first.

Issue #102 rejuvenated me! It had dialogue worth paying attention to. I could feel the anxiety and importance of the story. It felt alive and I’m glad for that. I’m glad that I feel at home again with the group and not like an outsider begging for a chance. It might have taken me re-reading 101 previous issues, but it worked, and I suggest doing the same to any TWD veteran who feels lost or out of touch with the story.

Thankfully, anyone fitting that description is SURELY reading this letters column.

I hope you feel the same way too, Robert, because this is the real story, print is the real deal and will be here way longer than any lifeless digital format.

Long live analog and welcome back to the back of the line.

P.S. In Hacks #67 you said you had enough story written out for 388 issues. Where are you at with that number now?

Mr. Mitchell T. Pilon

I was joking with the specific number. I have a solid plot through issue 200 and general ideas that could continue after that. I’m at a point with the series where I plot in 24 issue chunks, loosely... and then flesh things out as I write. I try to have at least four of those chunks planned, but there are times when a new chunk of issues is dropped in and things get pushed back... that’s why I have such far reaching plans. Basically, I’m saying this book looks like it will be around for a while.

Mr. Kirkman,

First and foremost I want to thank you for bringing me back into the comic world. Your title of THE WALKING DEAD is the best suspense/ action/drama I have ever read. It is totally unpredictable! I have to ask you...when Negan called his bat Lucille, it made me chuckle. It reminded me of The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air when Uncle Phil broke out Lucille to help them out hustle money in a game of pool. Lucille is also the nickname of B.B. King’s guitars...so my question is, why the name Lucille?? And any relevance to Fresh Prince?

Keep up the good work!

Arthur Gallucci.

P.S. If you include this in your comic book I promise to buy 100 copies!

One of my favorite episodes of The Fresh Prince.

Lucille was on my mind because of the scene in COOL HAND LUKE. I didn’t even really think about the BB King thing... if it had occurred to me, I would have picked a different name.

Dear Mr. Kirkman (and hello and welcome Sean!),

First off I need to do some ass kissing, because TWD is amazing. The comic, the show, the game, they are all amazing. Great writing and art, compelling characters. I couldn’t sleep well for a week because of Glenn’s death! There aren’t many pieces of media that have affected me like this story has. Absolutely brilliant. It was enough to get me to start reading comics again.

Anyway, enough boot kissing. I love your inclusion of gay characters in TWD, though I wish you would spend more time on Aaron and Eric. It’s not something many horror series address without it being the means of their death as some kind of a morals lesson or something. It’s nice that someone acknowledges that gay people will exist whether our society is here or not. I love this, but have you ever considered having other LGBTQ characters in your book? I think my heart would explode with joy if I saw a transgender woman, as a transgender woman, in media that isn’t a villain or a stereotype. Just a thought.

Much love,
Mila

I can’t speak for whether we get to see more of Aaron and Eric, but the LGBTQ community is just as important to the tapestry of TWD as real life. Thanks for the support!

I want to have Aaron and Eric featured more in the book and

I do have plans to do that. As far as a transgendered woman goes, I'm certainly not opposed to that, and there are currently plans for that to appear in a different series that I do.

Hello guys,

Greetings from Costa Rica! I have read every number of the comic and can't wait to read #103. How far are they from the sea or from a big lake they can use for fishing?

Alexandria is built upon the Potomoc River, so pretty damn close.

Yup... and you'll be seeing it... soon. Maybe that's too big a spoiler... should I delete that? Bah!

They always complain about running out of food and instead of hunting, fishing is something pretty much everybody could do. I wonder why this argument hasn't been explored in the past 102 issues.

They used to hunt, we've seen that many times. It's too dangerous, currently... and zombies eat animals... so they're somewhat scarce. Imagine if the current population was suddenly roaming the hills eating every animal in sight (that they could catch). It's slim pickins out there... that's why those people in the Fear The Hunters arc... were hunting people (that and hunting animals was more difficult).

Food cans and coffee should disappear any moment now as well as medical supplies. They have stayed there more than enough time and unless they can get some roosters and medicinal plants from Hilltop, I don't see how they are going to make it.

Anyway, thanks for this great entertainment, it is the only comic book I have read ever.

Esteban Morales
Costa Rica

Then read more comics! What else do you do with your time?!

Hi Mr. Kirkman,

Am I the only one who thinks that "Something to Fear" lacked sufficient development and seemed rather crude and artificial? Am I the only one who got less bothered with the brutal death of Glenn than with the overall plot misguidance and with how unrealistic and senseless some crucial events were handled in this arc?

I hope so...

Everybody who has followed TWD knows that it had always been marked by difficult decisions, tense moments where the guts or the heart end up winning over the reason (which sometimes brought tragic consequences for some characters). But however irrational were such choices and events, none of them so far have been so inconsistent with the personality and previous experience of the characters.

Rick is a seasoned and experienced survivor and knew from the very beginning that the Saviors would never give up their domination over everyone and everything. Nevertheless, in "Something to Fear" you've made him take two senseless and ridiculous decisions which are totally incompatible with his knowledge and personality: 1) leaving one gangster alive to "give the message to Negan." What for?

To draw them out? Rick had no other way of finding them. Also, he was overconfident and thought, like everyone else he's encountered since the Governor, that he would be way more capable than them and would pose a bigger threat to them than they did to him... and he was WRONG.

2) Abandoning the community right after an attack to seek help from Jesus (what Jesus alone can possibly do to help him, since it was Jesus who first looked after Rick for help against the Saviors?) only to arrive at Hilltop, punch Mr. Gregory and turn back.

Well, hold on there. Rick needed more man power and information... two things he knew he could get at The Hilltop. And as far as leaving when he did... another, better planned attack, could have killed them all... and by leaving RIGHT AFTER the attack, he know that would give him the most time before the next attack, no matter when it happened. That's logical. Also, again... Rick was overconfident. He's dealing with that now.

Negan, in turn, is a ruthless leader and certainly does not give a damn about the lives of those over whom he dominates. However, even after having subdued and trapped the guy who defied his leadership, he incomprehensibly refrained from killing him. In a situation like this, it is evident that the vision of the severed heads of Rick and the others would greatly undermine the morale of the rest of the survivors, making the subjugation of the community almost automatic. Why preserve Rick, Carl and the rest?

Now you're just spitballing, man. I don't mean to be confrontational, but I know more about Negan than you. COULD he have done what you suggest, sure... but there are reasons he did not.

In the case of the Governor, who also wanted to take everything from Rick, it is clear that the preservation of Rick's life occurred because of a very clear and strong reason: he needed Rick alive in order to discover the location of the prison. However, there were no such reasons in neither Rick's decisions nor in Negan's. Such choices were completely meaningless and inconsistent with the personality of both characters. If "Something to Fear" was an episode in a RPG campaign, the players (me included) would surely have the right to complain that the story told by the Dungeon Master (you) has lost its internal coherence.

Wait... what? I'm a dungeon master now?! You can criticize me ALL DAY LONG... but don't call me a dungeon master! (Commence hate mail from RPG fans now!)

Please don't misunderstand me. I know that your intention in this arc was to create something really scary, to put the characters in a situation where they really FEARED something and that this blow necessarily had to be delivered in TWD 100. I understand that you decided to twist

the storyline in this way in order to create a strong and lasting sense of impotence among Rick and the others.

I like your work very much and I'm not going to stop with TWD just because you did something I disliked (in fact, I believe that nobody who ever wrote such thing to you really quitted. It's just ridiculous). However, after the end of the arc, I felt that the disturbance you tried to create among us readers was not so strong and lasting as it could be because of the undeniable artificiality of Rick's and Negan's decisions. It seems to me that, in the end, the strength of the horror of Glenn's horrible slaughter and of Rick's powerlessness ended up dazzled by the fact that those events didn't evolved naturally but were rather "forced" in the storyline.

Perhaps if you had given those events some more development and time to properly mature before unleashing them, they'd surely be much more terrible. I'm sure you could have done better than that.

Best regards,

João Paulo S. Vilas Boas
Brazil

Brazil?! Are you reading this book on illegal downloads, too?

I appreciate the criticism, truly. Thanks for writing in and I hope that upcoming issues are much more to your liking.

Dear Walking Dead Geeks (rich geeks, sure, but still geeks)....

I want to say that issue #102 of TWD was the best THE WALKING DEAD letters column ever. I love the fact you have to live in constant fear now. When you think about it, that should give you a better feel for Rick and his happy group of campers as they go through their day. So, in this case, the death threats probably make you a better writer ...and.....hey.....make you even richer.....

Kirkman.....you disgust me.....You are the 1 percent.....and your fans just enabled you...

Take care....

Michael Heffron

Keep those stories coming, that is, unless Steven Yeun finds you out on the street.... seriously, be very careful. He is Asian. Probably has ninja blood...

Thank you? And you probably have white-person-make-people-sad blood?

Yeah, Ninja Blood? Totally racist, man. Jesus.

Robert and Crew,

Thanks for stretching out the comics as much as you stretched out the first portion of the second season of THE WALKING DEAD. My assumption is we will actually get some realization as to what the fuck is going on in about 15 years in the comics, which equates to about 150 years of the show.

At >\$2 a pop, the current comics aren't even worth torrenting for the time it would take me to do so, let alone the money I have spent on the actual editions. I am surprised AMC and your publishing group aren't paying people to watch and read. The first season and first, say, 60 comics were great, now you have sold out and are saying, "fuck the fans".

I have NEVER said "fuck the fans." I've literally never said those words... I mean, SEPARATELY... yeah... together... no.

I would rather watch the corpse of the original Starz Spartacus fight again than read your joke of a zombie comic. Way to be a sellout guys! How about delivering some real content in issues rather than continuations into milestone issues since the show came around?

It must be great to be as on-subject as the new Resident Evil movie is to the original gaming franchise that changed zombies forever, only to ruin them through commercialization.

I consider it an honor.

He's seen every Resident Evil movie, you know. In the fucking theater.

Thanks a lot, fuck you.

Ben D.

The immortal Ben Dover, everybody!!! Not often we get a REAL celebrity around these parts.

More letters should end with "fuck you." That was AWESOME!

And that's all we got time for this month. But, wait, there's more comics! Check out a preview of that returning Skybound favorite, WITCH DOCTOR! The new volume, MAL PRACTICE, kicks up the horror of the original series, and it's written and illustrated by the same guys, Brandon Seifert and Lukas Ketner! It comes out in two short weeks, November 28th. Get one for you and another for your momma, too!

-Sean Mackiewicz

You're mamma told me she likes Witch Doctor a lot... last time I was "with" her, I mean. You get what I'm saying when I say "with?" Get it?

See you next month, readers! And remember...

...fuck you!

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

100 straight issues. In the comics world, that is an unbelievable milestone for an artist to hit. Charlie Adlard makes my job so much easier, and he gets better all the goddamn time. Congrats!

This really is a HUGE deal. You should all thank Charlie for the fact that we even got to this point... especially so quickly. He's constantly pushing me to y'know... get script turned in, and he's always picking up my slack when I fall behind due to the TV show or... I don't know... watching a TV show. So we really wouldn't have been monthly EVERY MONTH for the last THREE YEARS without him.

And... my god, this book looks SOOOOOO cool. Watching Charlie's style evolve from issue 7 to now, man... it's amazing. And he's STILL evolving. He hasn't settled into a rut, he's just continuing to improve and expand his skill sets.

The joy of my life has been to collaborate with such talented, awesome people. And Charlie Adlard is at the top of that list. He makes it all worthwhile.

Thanks, Charlie!

Hey Robbie,

Can I call u Robbie? Anyway, Rob, I've been fucking obsessed with zombies thanks to you, man, I'm a big fan of your work, I'm writing you here not wanting to rant about some character's death like some people are, but to make a suggestion that has nothing to do with the storyline. My suggestion is please, at least release 2 issues per month or more if you could, man. Stop being an asshole. I feel like you hooked us into your work to disappoint us, why? Your monthly release is already killing us, not to mention fucking cliffhanger endings on each issue.

Sorry for my English, I'm Cambodian, probably the only person in the country to be reading THE WALKING DEAD. I hate my friends, coz when I tried to talk to them about the Comic, they was like "What? The TV is based on comic?" That's major face palm right there, mister, you follow me?

HA!

You can refer to me in your letter hacks as Bobby Personal cock sucker if you like, coz I will do anything for you to release more than 1 issue per month, I will pay \$5 a pop on the issue.

Thanks
Regards, DeadHarvester

Letters like this frustrate me. I guess a lot of people read this comic that have never read comics, or don't know how it works, and that's an AMAZING thing. But getting 36 issues out in three years, and getting nearly 120 issues out in ten years, I believe we'll be at 116 when we hit our tenth anniversary this October... is AMAZING and, I believe, unprecedented for an independent comic. But instead, I'm getting cussed at for not releasing issues faster...

You just can't win.

Still, I'm glad people love the book enough to be begging for more... really beats the alternative.

Kirkman,

Now that I have bought THE ROAD TO WOODBURY and the video game, you don't need to worry about selling me either of them. They are both great and I enjoy them equally.

Yeah, but did you buy THE WALKING DEAD ASSAULT game for your iPhone and iPad yet? Check out that ad on the back cover. It's freakin' bonkers, man. Anyways...

There's always something to sell... sorry, guys.

However, I would like to know which is supposed to be canon to the comic series? I won't mention any spoilers for those who haven't read/played them yet, but Lilly Caul has two different stories even though both the video game and novel were described as canon to the comic series. I'm not gonna lie and say this mess up didn't upset me a bit. I would love to hear what you have to say about it. Thanks.

Jake Trusheim

Officially, the Lilly from the video game is not the Lilly from the comic. The one from the novels IS. BOTH take place in the same "universe" as the comic... but it's a universe with more than one Lilly.

Mr. Kirkman

I love the series, but I will admit I love the show more, heck, the PS3 game rocks, too. I know having the use of hindsight helps flesh out issues in the story and improve on characters being more organic, that's why I still keep reading the comics! My only complaints are really with how short each comic is. They seemed so much longer back in the day... oh and one thing that

came to mind while reading...

Carbines fire arms do not have any kick. Standard M-16/M-4 (and almost all civilian copycat firearms) do not have full auto, single shot and burst fire. They can be rigged, but why would you if ammo is a concern? Carl might have fumbled the weapon a bit, maybe even dropped it, but no kick = no getting thrown to the ground.

Keep up the fire!

Jacob

P.S You know a WALKING DEAD game with the openness of Fallout/Elder Scroll series would be amazing!

While fact checking this I disappeared into the gun-loving internet and remembered an afternoon I spent firing guns in Arkansas. And I still have no idea if this is true, but we'll assume it is.

We most certainly will not. I know Jacob would love to point out some kind of inaccuracy in this comic, but I ain't no fool. I do my research thank you very much--and a machine gun of any kind, has tremendous kick back and would definitely knock Carl off his feet like that. Trust me.

Dear Robert "The Dungeon Master" Kirkman and Sean "The Commie" Mackiewicz,

Man. What an issue. If Carl hadn't been so intent on looking cool he could've put an end to this whole Ray Steven...uh...Negan business once and for all. He did look cool, though. Until he actually fired the rifle and got knocked on his butt. Didn't look so cool then, did you, Carl? Maybe if you weren't so concerned with your appearance and concentrated more on actually getting the job done by choosing the right fucking weapon, you wouldn't be in this mess and have to rely on Jesus to bail you out! Fucking Carl. Should've stayed in the house.

Rob Shelor
Roanoke, VA

You don't know anything about guns, Rob Shelor. You should listen to Jacob.

Okay, Kirk, I like you, really I do. But I was pissed off the second Rick didn't tell Carl his plan. I mean, Carl is an annoying piece of shit, I forgive him for it because he's a kid in a zombie apocalypse. Whatever. I've just accepted he's annoying.

There is an ungodly amount of hate for Carl this month that I completely disagree with. But go on.

The thing is, the TV show makes him even more annoying. I'm sure you've seen the "where's Carl" jokes about it. So yes, Carl has a habit of disappearing, of taking things into his own hands. You think his father would understand this by now. Rick was worried about Michonne, he talked to her. Why did he not do the same with Carl? I'm so annoyed. I really don't like Carl now. And I will always love Rick, and I will always want him to be on top of the world, but GODDAMMIT, he is a terrible father. Ugh. And that directly conflicts with him being on top of the world, so you can understand my frustration. I might be going off track here. I think I am. Can you just please make Rick seem less stupid when it comes to Carl? How did he not see that coming? I did. I saw it coming way before it happened. Please don't do something like this again.

Sincerely,
Fatin

P.S. If you have anything to do with how the show is going and you have a hand in building the storyline, can we please have a Daryl sex scene? I almost loved the comics more, but the show has Daryl.

I'll see what I can do.

P.P.S. Um. I'm from Pakistan. I've read all your comics illegally online or through torrents. Sorry...can I please have an autograph? I mean, c'mon...I live in Pakistan. Where am I supposed to find your comics here and oh God, I've never had an autographed anything. Please be nice.

What would I sign? A computer screen?

Dear Mr. Kirkman

In #104 letter section, you managed to throw away a lot of the respect I had for you.

"Brazil? Are you reading this book on illegal downloads, too?"

That was hard to read from a user who spent more than \$100 on your digital content. In fact, your comic is published here in Portuguese too, but I can't wait the delay, so I buy them digitally. You should read about Brazil a little bit, it being the sixth economy in the world and a solid democracy, you know?

Anyway, good series, getting better in recent editions.

MARCELO

If a country is good enough to host the World Cup, I’ve got no beef. Besides, we all know PAKISTAN is the problem.

I was just making a joke! I didn’t mean to offend you. As the previous letter shows, at times, foreign readers are only able to get the books illegally. Due to the success of the show, that is becoming less true by the month as THE WALKING DEAD is translated into more and more countries, and Comixology continues to sell the books digitally worldwide in English... but... I was making a joke!

Plus, I’m American, so I don’t know the difference between Brazil and Pakistan. Wocka wocka.

Can I get some of that respect back now?

Kirkman,

Just read #104. Please for the love of god wrap this Negan/Governor rehash coasting up as soon as possible. Why are you so heavily and obviously padding such a rehashed storyline??? The plot from #101 - #104 could have been done in 1 issue (2 very comfortably). I could send you some layouts if you disagree...

PLEASE DO!

Anyways...if you wanted to do something predictable, why didn’t you at least go with something new that people would have (not just paid for) but actually liked (like adding Daryl or someone from the TV show)?

Just please get to the point and have Negan either die horribly or become Rick’s gay lover/best friend, because seriously...we both know it’s going to be something close to one or the other.

Also, please move away from the “community vs. community” stories after this. Can you say de-luge? Anyone who’s read your comic from the beginning has seen this before and while an alternate Governor storyline plays out on TV, we comic readers get the not so new Neganovenor storyline. I’m not so sure this comic lends itself to having so many characters wandering around in the background that barely anyone gives a shit about. It was much more interesting when there were more zombies and less people. It’s evolved into nothing but a cheap “Redneck Game Of Thrones” with a few zombies wandering about.

Redneck Game of Thrones! Let’s go pitch THAT to AMC!

I really wish you had just had Carl kill Dwight and Negan and take over at the end of #104, then tell his dad, “That’s the way you do it...you have to murder these kind of people...all of them if you have to.” That would have been tits. Having Carl somehow think it would be a good idea to try to take Negan into custody and then manage to hit everyone in front of him BUT Negan and Dwight was some hokey mind-boggling Bendis-y characterization bullshit for the obvious sake of padding. Watching Rick and crew do NOTHING BUT get punked out for god knows how long is starting to get boring as fuck. Somebody cool needs to DO something cool real soon. You’re a great writer, I’m sure you’ve just hit a comfortable slump, you’ll get through it.

Thanks!
Floyd Herbert

Thanks for the support, Floyd. I’m sure I’ll get through it, too. I’m sorry you don’t enjoy the current storyline but I don’t agree with you. The only thing Negan has in common with The Governor is that they are male, and are opposing Rick. By your logic Lex Luthor and Braniac are the same because they both fight Superman. They’re antagonists... and they’re vastly different.

The Governor never had a baseball bat!

To all at TWD,

Well, this 65-year-old male is back reading comics again. I was hooked on the story by the TV episodes and that lead me to the comics, which I was able to get at our local library in the consolidated issues. Now I’m reading the monthly issues via my iPad.

One of the things that has struck me about TWD is how similar this is for the survivors to the time of the Middle Ages. The Black Plague was a surge that nearly wiped out Europe and what arose were these mercenary units of men that we know as knights. Communities built walled cities to resist these armies and later raised their own armies and created these entities we know as city-states. I see the same thing developing here and it has lead me to hit the histories of the time. Most specifically, Barbara Tuchman’s “A Distant Mirror.” See the Wikipedia entry for the book to get a better idea of what I’m saying. I believe somewhere some history major with an English minor will write a thesis on the parallels between the 14th C. and TWD.

My question, and I have one, has Robert read any histories of the Middle Ages and incorporated any of the themes into TWD? Oh, I also believe that the focus of the stories in both the graphic novel and the TV series is not so much Rick, but Carl. It’s the loss of innocence and learning the world is just not what it is, is, in my mind, the most interesting part of the story lines.

Finally, the TV series “Revolution” while it has no “walkers,” is also in the same vein. Powerful men build armies, terrorize the populace and there’s an element of science mystery. In fact, I’d say that NBC has ripped off TWD.

Michael Wallace
Sebastopol, CA

“Powerful men build armies, terrorize the populace and there’s an element of science mystery.” So, EVERY civilization since the advent of Christianity?

Just kidding. I love Jesus. He’s practically a ninja!

I’m not touching this one...

Dear Walking Dead Team,

Will we dedicated readers ever get a book of nothing but Letter Hacks? I’m talking The Complete Letter Hacks Compendium Edition. I would love to read each and every letter, but do not have the time to read the back of all 100+ issues (I’m too busy watching the show and playing the video game). Anyhow, carry on now, Hail Kirkman, zombies are cool, blah blah blah.

Daniel Bellay
Fairmont, WV

Yeah, remember the good ol’ Letter Hacks days of Michonne’s Rape and Carl’s Face? It’s been a while since there’s been a good controversy. We barely even get Glenn letters anymore.

Just wait until... oh, never mind.

I love money as much as the next person, but a book collecting just letters columns seems CRAZY to me. Would people actually want that? Just feel like they’re dated and not something that really should be preserved in that way. And it’s cool that there’s something ONLY in the single issues... I don’t know...

Dear Sean and Kirkman,

Carl has turned into a complete bad ass after trying to gun down Negan and his lowly group of thugs. I can honestly see Carl turn into a Negan-like character as he matures and grows even darker and cold blooded. I have a few brain teasers for you guys.

Does Carl respect his father or the others at all anymore?

Of course he does, he’s not a monster.

Would it be in Carl’s nature to eventually look up to Negan and his dastardly ways?

Maaaaaaaybe... keep reading.

Please get that stinking fur collared jacket off of Rick.

Anyhow, between the TV show, the comic, the video game, and the nonstop talking about the above mentioned items...I now have no social life. Thanks a lot Kirkman, you jerk!

Daniel Bellay
Fairmont, WV

You again?!

Dear Mr. Kirkmanikov & Mackleonardiezierdi,

FIRST OFF:

Fuck You! You said you wanted more letters to end that way, but Fuck You, that’s how I’m beginning the letter!

Awesome!

SECOND OFF:

Carl is finally going to do some serious shit, and I’m seriously tense for how this is gonna turn out. I’m scared that he’ll become evil, which is totally not what I was expecting. We all envisioned Carl taking the leadership role like his dad (it seems like where the story was heading)... but Oh My Goodness! That sociopath Negan really knows the kind of asset he’s stumbled onto here. The plot thickens in such a dangerous way... I didn’t see this coming. Rick is planning an offense while pretending to NOT plan an offense, which is plot-thickness in itself, but Carl is resentful, violent, passionate... and IN THE HANDS OF NEGAN!!! Will he maintain his perspective? Or will his young mind fall victim to the wiles of Negan? Will this be the element that finally breaks Rick and makes him submit? Find out in the next few episodes!!!

THIRD OFF:

I just finished the first collection of Prophet... I know you’re not associated with it, but it’s an Image comic and it’s one of the coolest things I’ve ever read. We need more sci-fi! I don’t want to do more month-to-month comics so I’m waiting for the next trade, but Prophet has an awesome story built up and I’m looking forward to reading more. Ed Brisson worked on Prophet, and he also works on the Murder Books... have you guys read those??? Some amazing storytellin’ and awesome art.

No, but I read The Comeback, Ed’s new Image book. Check it out!

FOURTH OFF:

Fuck You!

(I’m just joking!)

Dripping with love,
Patt Mayne

Dear Kirk,

I’m glad you’re not a Dungeon Master. Playing for a DM like you would go as follows:

1. All NPC’s you encounter talk in monologues.
2. The party would only have one monster encounter per session. 2. For each new campaign, the party would encounter the same situations.

You’d be a suck-ass DM.

Been reading since around #13, keep it up. Oh and my mother loves the show, so don’t fuck it up (any worse). Love you, Mom!

Kindly go fuck yourself,
Mitchell Lenyo
Bloomington, Indiana

Uh.... thanks?

I can’t wait for next month where we discuss Carl’s Face: The Revenge.

Also, the new issue of the Walking Dead Magazine is out and there’s interviews with David “The Governor” Morrissey and all sorts of cool people. Check it out!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Please do! See you all back here next month!! For Charlie’s 101st issue and my 107th!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Ezekiel?! Have you ever in your life known an Ezekiel? I doubt it. There you go, getting all writerly. Who do we meet next, Persephone? Amadeus?

Is this how we're opening letters columns now? Are our letters not critical enough for you? The editor of the book needs to pile on even more?! Come on, Sean, I thought better of you.

Ezekiel is a cool name, damn it. And the end of the issue wouldn't have had much impact if Jesus said, "I think it's time I introduced you to Bill."

I hate you, Sean.

LETTERS!!!!

Robert and Co,

Woah Negan is so handsome I fell in love with him but I'm still a lesbian I think. Seriously though, I wasn't gonna send one of these in, but my inherit love of Negan got to me. Plus, also, I was bored.

And since I'm bored I'm gonna gently bully Robert. The shit you're coming up with is ridiculous. The bit about the baseball bat being eaten out like a lady? Do you ever just sit back and look at what you've written and just go 'wtf??????'.

Happy Holidays xoxoxo,
Suha Kakish

I'm pretty sure that's Robert's favorite page he's ever written.

It's ridiculous, I know. I honestly think Negan is the most fun character I've ever written. I'm actually a bit of a prude. I've been known to curse as much as Negan at times, and maybe in the same playful manner, but the sex stuff, the p word... I don't really use that stuff in my vocabulary. So getting to write a character that's so unlike me is a lot of fun, and he's just weird... "Nicer than a fuckless fuck on free fuck day"? I have no idea where that came from. It's really a game to try and write sentences with as many instances of the SAME curse word as possible.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

WTF, so in one of issue 105's letter hacks there was a graphic novel mentioned. Since you insist on only publishing one book a month I decided I would try to find said novel and read while I wait for the next book to be released. Anyways so I run to my computer fire up the dial up "bebebebebrrrraaakBRAHRINGRINGRINGBEEPBEERPBEER," open my web browser and begin to type in Robert Kirkman graphic novel. Only I didn't get that far I got as far as Robert Kirkman and do you know what Google suggested I look at in order:

Robert Kirkman net worth
Robert Kirkman
Robert Kirkman Gay

I have a feeling this is due to you Googling your own net worth repeatedly and looking to Google as some kind of magic 8 ball to discover your sexuality. Don't worry though, I've started a campaign to try and fix your Google cred. I've began searching the following in an attempt to fix this little problem:

Robert Kirkman has sex with newborn donkey
Robert Kirkman illegal Alien

And of course: Robert Kirkman how about some fucking double issues, a rise of Negan or at least a fucking two hour fucking finale/mid season finale or a summer time episode, you slack ass.

Thank you,
Calvin Freid

We've dealt with the issue of Googling Robert before. It can lead to some pretty unpleasant results...

I am extremely proud of the fact that I'm popular enough with the bear loving subset of the gay community enough for their Google searches of me to appear so close to the top. Either that or former editor Sina Grace spends way too much time on the internet Googling me to alter the search results.

I thoroughly enjoyed issue 105. It took a while to get here but finally we get to learn more about Negan. After reading the issue's Letter Hacks, I feel the need to speak up as a long time fan of the comic. Sean's comment on a letter:

"Have you ever Googled Robert Kirkman Bear"?

Well, of course I had to look it up after that. Maybe I missed the reference in the past. I couldn't for the life of me remember ever hearing of this before. So I watched.

Then I came up with two conclusions.

1. If someone suggests that you do a Google search for Robert Kirkman Bear. DON'T

2. I forgot what the other conclusion was. Just don't Google search Robert Kirkman bear.

I've told myself to remember #2 going forward. If I forget in the future, I'm getting a Memento-style tattoo. "Don't Google search Robert Kirkman Bear" and "Forget you, Sean."

Jay Chudley
La Mesa, Ca

P.S. 105 was great. No Rick in this one huh?

Every day I strive to do my job to the best of my ability—consider this one in the WIN column.

Y'know... I've honestly never Googled that... at least I don't recall doing it. And I'm not trying to be cool, I vanity Google myself all the time to make sure that "sasquatching" thing has died down.

Hello,

Tripwires are part of any decent radical defense perimeter, aren't they? HA!

For the last 40 issues I've been wondering when our gang was going to run low on ammo and solve the problem by switching to 12 gauge shotguns, reloading the shells with dimes. At least the money would have value again, right? Immediate value I'll bet.

Also flamethrowers are easy...while all of those cars sitting around have fuel in them, that gasoline is continually going to spoil with age.... It will end up shellacy and useless in a vehicle's engine. However, it still makes a wonderful flame. More and more our heroes are encountering threats that are alive in the form of raiders, rival groups, etc. Flame cannot be underestimated in its efficacy against a living foe.

"Flame cannot be underestimated in its efficacy against a living foe." Fuuuuuck... I gotta use that some time.

Pikes for killing the dead. They could make them out of steel rakes, and other such metal ended common garden tools.

Just my completely unsolicited arm-chair-quarterback two cents.

Thanks for making this comic. It makes me feel like a kid again waiting for it to come out each month and reading it.

Roger in Iowa

As this book continues to progress, you will begin to see more and more makeshift weapons. The spears at the Hilltop were just the beginning. We're easing into it. The idea is that this is a gradual shift to an almost unrecognizable world. You shouldn't notice the change from issue to issue, but when you eventually compare issue 10 to issue 280... you'll see how much things have changed.

Hi. I was wondering, when writing for TWD do you have anything you do to get in the proper mood for TWD? Like, a song to listen to or something.

Stool Pigeon

Robert needs to run out of other things to do first. Then maybe he starts writing. (Or maybe he listens to "The Very Best of Hall & Oates"...which is about the most GANGSTER music on his laptop.)

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and The Dirty Three helps, music wise. I don't really have to get in the mood, or anything like that. Emails from Charlie let me know he's going to need script soon helps. I'm a mess.

Hi Robert Kirkman,

First off, I'm huge fan of both the comics and TV series, as well as the game and the novels. Great storytelling and Charlie Adlard brings the story to life so well through his art. THE WALKING DEAD is one best series, if not the best of the last decade. A couple of questions I would like to clear up and plot holes I would like to clear up.

First off, as disappointed as I am of the deaths of Abraham and Glenn who were my favorite characters, I like the direction you're taking the series with Negan and the Saviors as the new villains. I liked the Governor, but Negan blows him out of the water. As you said yourself, no one lives forever in the series, so it's a no brainer Negan will die eventually and I'm curious to see how Rick and co. will bring him down.

Second, I understood why you killed Glenn off, but why did you kill

Abraham? He still had a lot of potential in him. Did you kill him to pursue the storyline of Rick and co. giving into the Saviors because he was important as muscle to the group and they were screwed without him?

It was his time. His death provides a lot of cool story potential, same as always.

Third, what happened to Jeff Grimes? I know you like to leave dangling story bits, like what you did with Alexander Davidson, but I think it would be cool for Rick to somehow come across his brother randomly. It would be shocking, unexpected and it could make for a great storyline. If not, you should at least clear the air on whether he is alive or not. After Rick found Lori and Carl and settled down at the prison, wouldn't he think to go look for his parents and/or brother? Unless they lived far away and he most likely considered them dead. Still, Jeff Grimes should make an appearance.

No, he shouldn't. Rick has a brother named Jeff. Like a lot of adult brothers, they didn't live near each other, and it would be dangerous and impractical to go and find him.

MAYBE Jeff is awesome, and there's another group out there led by Jeff Grimes. Or maybe he's an idiot and he sucks. Rick probably talks about Jeff from time to time, but that kind of conversation would be pointless and boring, so that's the kind of thing you don't get to see in the book. Like when Abraham pooped... let me tell you, that guy was pooping all the time.

You will never see Jeff Grimes in this book. Michonne has an ex-husband... that's not a dangling plot thread, that's just back story mentioned about a character.

Fourth, I've heard you say before that Rick will not survive the entire run of the book and the book could carry on with someone else like Michonne. Is this still the case? Any ideas on how much longer he will go on if it is the case, without spoiling too much because I've heard you say before your constantly changing storylines around.

Yes, I would love to write this book long past Rick's death. It seems unrealistic that he would survive all the way to the end, I'm not ruling it out though--maybe this story ends when he dies. Or maybe it doesn't. I'm not going to ever tell you when a character is going to die. That would ruin the fun.

Fifth, this has to do with the TV show, why did you kill off Oscar? He was a great character. What a waste of potential by killing him off.

Oscar was awesome. And Vincent Ward did an amazing job playing him. It's actually a pretty tough thing for me, because characters on the show are often times mapped out to their death before an actor is even hired. So we knew, or at least, were pretty sure and had plans in place to kill Oscar before Vincent was even cast. It was a bummer to lose that guy... just like it's been a bummer to lose all the fantastic actors on the show whose characters have been killed off. I don't mean to sound sappy, but it really does bug me. It's so much easier with the comic.

Anyways, I hope this letter gets into Letter Hacks and you can answer these questions that have been bothering me for a while, need answers, thanks.

Sincerely,
Andrew Mulligan

OK, Kirkman, we're both busy people with better things to do, so let's cut to the chase: Please explain how in the HECK the right side of Carl's head grew back. 'Cause that humungous pic from #83 was pretty clear on showing us that from his eye outward (including a good chunk of THE HAT, which did NOT grow back) was completely gone. How does that work? Thanks, and keep up the good work, love the comic, yadda yadda yadda.

Wendy Bodine
Jamesburg, NJ

This oughta be interesting...

Look again. A lot of people see that hole in Carl's head as going straight back through the back of his head--it actually shot through his eye at an angle, which you can see in that two page spread, see the meat of his head inside the wound? The bullet went in his eye, left out of his temple, and damaged his hat.

Any differences between the exposed bone face Carl has now and the initial wound we saw on that splash, would be due to the work of Doctor Cloyd stopping the bleeding and cleaning the wound so it can heal properly.

Hey guys, love the comic and the show. I'll keep this short and sweet: why are there no dogs? Like, anywhere in either the series or comic. To the best of my recollection there hasn't been a single dog to be seen anywhere. Seriously, wouldn't Rick and co. have run into some dogs by now (for better or for worse)? They were on a farm for christ's sake! Or some bad guys be running with a pack of ill-tempered strays they found. The populous is on the run or zombified, but their dogs, man! What happened to all of their dogs?

Nathaniel

PS I think Carl needs a dog. A Rottweiler.

Okay, fine... dogs... or maybe TIGERS? Is that better?

Kirkman,

I recently became a correction officer in Passaic County and my first day in the jail all I could think about was how I would utilize the jail during the apocalypse, so thank you for that haha... My question is what's going on with the Cutting Room Floor book? I'm dying to read it!!! Thanks.

Jeff Heff

You're not supposed to ask about the Cutting Room Floor ever. EVER!!!!!! But when it's good and ready, we'll resolicit.

I'm very sorry about that. It's been much more difficult to put that book together than I anticipated. So we've pulled it from the schedule and will resolicit it when it's finally done. It's going to be awesome when it comes out, I promise.

Dear Robert and the Skybound crew,

Have you considered making Skybound titles longer than 22 pages? I know 22 pages is the industry standard, but Skybound titles are beyond industry

standard; they are excellent. These books are far superior to anything coming out of Marvel or DC, yet Skybound still sticks to their standards. Why not differentiate the formats of the Skybound titles by giving your readers a little something extra, beyond the excellent stories of course. You can market your books as giving the readers more than what Marvel or DC give them. My local comic shop publishes its percentage of overall sales by each company. Marvel and DC always blow Image out of the water, but Image is always 3rd and hovers around 15 percent of overall sales. This is the time to shake things up; Image seems like it has something special going with all these great new stories, but you need a carrot to lure in new readers. Image has superior writers and when it comes to sci-fi, crime and horror, Marvel and DC don't even come close. I propose extending only Skybound labeled books to 30 pages. As it stands, the story barely moves along at a snail's pace in THE WALKING DEAD and it's just frustrating reading the book month to month. The TPBs are thoroughly enjoyable since it's a bulk of content. When I first started reading TWD in 2008, it took me a while to get into it because the book is over in 10 minutes, then you have to wait another 30 days for 10 more minutes of story.

Greg Taylor

Industry standard (say, Marvel and DC) is 20 pages per issue nowadays, at least for \$2.99. Charging an extra dollar and adding pages wouldn't move the market share number. We'd make more money per issue and perhaps gain ground on dollar share, but with no guarantee that sales will increase. We put out at least 7 books--over 140 pages--a month. That's a new trade's worth of content monthly. We've heard about the issue of not getting enough WALKING DEAD (or INVINCIBLE, etc.)...but everyone works hard to get you issues monthly...and we'd like you to be happy with that. We good?

Also, I'll point out that the 22 page standard isn't just what Marvel and DC does. It's the amount of work days in the average month. Drawing a monthly comic is hopefully done at the rate of a page a day. So 22 work days equals 22 pages. More than that... would just make the books late. So you're getting the same amount of pages no matter what.

You've done a great job of showing us all the lengths people will go to survive in the Zombie Apocalypse but you seem to ignore the ones who would really be in charge in a Zombie Apocalypse: Necrophiliacs. Why haven't Rick and co. run into any Necrophiliacs yet? Are you saving them for the Biggest Bad of the series?

Jason

If you coitus a zombie, is it really necrophilia? Dead means inanimate. But zombies move; they're in a state between life and death. So is it really necrophilia...or some brave new sexual terrain?

Unless you're talking about a zombie with its brains blown out. Because if you're talking about fucking a brain damaged zombie, that shit's foul--and most definitely necrophilia.

No... just... no.

Dear Walking Dead team,

Any plans to put out a graphic novel adaptation of Rise of the Governor? Nothing against the written word, but it would be great to see the Governor's origin story in all its illustrated glory!

Thanks for all your hard work,
Stephen

Nope. If you want that story... you're just going to have to read the novel. The story is specifically designed to work better in novel form--it wouldn't be the same, or as good, as a comic. Try it out--you may love it... then you can try Twilight next!

Dear Kirkman,

I need your help settling a reoccurring argument between a friend and myself. Paul "JESUS" Monroe, is it pronounced Jesus or the Spanish Jesús? I know it's trivial and petty, but a few seconds of your time please. Oh concerning Carl, you've tortured the kid enough; throw Andrea around for a while or something. Best wishes.

H.P.

Andrea will get hers! As for Jesus... it's a nickname he got because of his long hair and beard... so it's the traditional biblical JESUS.

Dear Kirk,

If Negan in #105 is any indication, SOMEONE may have some severe issues with jealousy and women. That's all I'm going to say about that. Moving on, I have a question: is the implication that the cheating wife may leave Negan, go back to their former peasant life with the man they cheated with, and he then won't get "the iron"? Because if that's the case, whoever cheats with these women is seriously not right in the head. ESPECIALLY now, after we see that at least two people have gotten the iron in this community. The most troubling part is that, if these women may leave free and clear, while also sparing their illicit lovers the iron, they sure have some icy hearts by allowing their fellow philanderers to be adorned with a permanent scarlet letter.

Bitches be crazy, I guess.

Mitchell Lenyo
Bloomington, Indiana

"Bitches be crazy?" Let's start at the top of the crazy pyramid and leave it at Negan is fucking crazy.

Yeah, come on, man. There's an awful lot of manipulation and brain washing going on at the Savior's factory... people aren't exactly themselves.

Flame cannot be underestimated in its efficacy against a living foe. Words to live by.

-Sean

Also, next month, we meet Ezekiel. He has a tiger.

Yep! And it's going to be awesome!! I'll see you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Sometimes you just want to run the letters that you never want to run. People that beg to be included. Those whose English teacher failed them. Shit talking 12-year-olds. This one's for you, folks.

Oh, dear... what are we getting ourselves into... I hope you know what you're doing, Mackiewicz.

Hello, you guys. So, here's the deal: I'm going to cover several sorta mandatory areas in hope that you'll publish my letter.

The Walking Dead is my favorite comic currently being published, it has a great creative team, Mr. Kirkman, in particular, has a certain knack for understanding and developing his characters at a very intimate level, which makes them all the more believable. (Mandatory ass-kissing, check). Furthermore, this is my first ever letter written to a comic book (check).

I just want to point out that if mandatory ass-kissing was required to get printed, over half of the letters we print wouldn't make the cut... so there!

Now, on to the core topic of this missive. I'm from Colombia, I was expecting to be the first ever Colombian to write to "Letter Hacks", but some dick beat me to it. Still, you don't get many letters from this parts (publish this!). Now that I have disclosed my whereabouts, I believe that it is only fair to go out and let you know that I first discovered your fine book through the Internet some years ago (before the TV show even existed), via illegal download (Heathen! You Thief! Shame on You!), but it turns out, in my dear country, as much as I love it, there are no such thing as comic book stores, the only way to get a hold of "funny books" is at supermarkets, book stores, magazines retailers, and such. And believe me the offer is rather mediocre, to say the least (mostly the big two's stuff), also, I don't like my English media translated. Still, I did try to get your stuff legally, but wasn't able to until recently when you started shipping worldwide from the Skybound online store. So, even though it costs me almost double to get your books (thanks to shipping fees), I ordered the first two TPB's and a T-shirt, and, yes, I intend to keep on buying the rest of the paperbacks (you greedy bastards), cause I do understand the importance of supporting the creators of the stuff you like.

Wait, selling the product we make (to sell) makes us greedy? Okay. Thanks for the support, just the same.

Now, on a different note, with introductions out of the way. What finally brought me to write in was two particular facts: a girl that wrote a letter to your crew in which she stated that she basically downloaded all your material illegally (bailly move) and still got published, so, I guess you appreciate bold displays of courage like that. And... the other reason was a comment from the new publisher, which I found ridiculously hilarious, 'twas about Christianity screwing up humanity. Maybe it was just a joke, but, still, I found it pretty damn funny (I'm really apprehensive about religions), that, and Mr. Kirkman's reply was just the icing on the cake. Now Mr. Mackiewicz is just fine in my book. I guess, what I'm getting at is that not only this book is unmatched comic book entertainment, but it also has all these other little things, like its ever-interesting letters page that make it all the more special and worth reading.

Not EVERYONE appreciated that joke. To be continued...

I'm starting to realize that I almost immediately forget the content of these letters columns after they're sent to print. I'm scared...

So keep on doing your thing and I'll keep on BUYING, and reading. I almost forgot! Your book sucks sometimes (-not really). Negative comment, check). And... Fuck you! (-just kidding-. Closing cursing, check).

Have a good one, and I'll see you when I get published.

Felipe Saldarriaga

Felipe, you just served up the perfect four quadrant letter: ass kissing? Check. Illegal downloading? Check. Editor name check? Check! Fuck you! Check! You had a plan and you executed. Respect.

Is Ezekiel the leader of a band of funky DC refugees? Will they sway Negan's punk rockers towards love and goodwill with p-funny chill dogs, and good feelings? I mean, they are just kind of hanging out outside of the Chocolate City. Rick and co. is bound to run into some groups that are predominantly black.

Keep it coming,

Ed

Did Bad Brains survive the apocalypse as well? Does being fearless vampire killers translate into successful zombie killing as well? The world may never know.

Hiya all. I'm sort of a new reader, my first encounter with TWD was through the show and I became interested in the comic as well after third season. So I have had lot to catch up and I managed to read every comic twice already. Keep up the lovely job of killing up everyone's favorite characters! And Jesus is just awesome, I've been waiting so long a character with martial arts skills in a zombie world! (I do Tae Kwon Do and own a sword.) Gotta admit I am surprised how little people generally know about edible materials in the wilds (in the comic and IRL). I mean, I could find a plant to use as a nature's own soap. And lots of edible stuff. Like plantain. You can eat it and even use to treat minor wounds. But now I'm rambling. I'm gonna (try to) keep this letter short 'cause my kitten is stealing all my popcorn while I'm writing this. It was supposed to be short letter!

Fuck kittens and short letters.

Lotta F-Bombs in this letters column...

The main reason I decided to write my first letter to you guys was because I started to think about nuclear power plants, I do not know if these questions

have been asked and answered, I didn't have patience to read all letter hacks. What happened to them? I mean, they can't be left unattended even if they were shutdown... And seeing how quickly shit went down I don't think they were even able to shut them down, not all of them.

So is there gonna be any mushroom clouds anytime soon?

Maybe there already are... in other parts of the country...

I just love this comic and the show, I'm trying to get my boyfriend to read it too. He reads too much Star Wars comics anyway. And he wouldn't be able to survive zombie apocalypse with his lightsaber.

Yours respectfully,
Marjo-Elisa, Finland

Actually, I imagine a lightsaber would come in pretty handy in the zombie apocalypse...

I hate you.
Happy?
Yes, im sure you are...
I really hate you. I do, a lot.
I now know what the fudge was wrong with my non-favorite character, the bowman, who I look at as the evil Daryl.
Thats cool.
Really.
BUT. That sick son a glitch, Negan. Grrrrrr.
Carl.
Glenn.
Abraham.
Ok, ok, I know. You wont kill Carl, haha taunt. Abraham killed by Dwight.
But what the HELL?!!?!!!!!!
DO YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD FALL FOR THAT AGAIN FOR LIKE THE TWENTIETH TIME?!!?!!
Ok, Carl getting shot in the back. Scared me.
Issue 48. Scared the hell out of me. Ok....
Carl getting shot in the eyeball. Scared the fraggin hell out of my bunghole so meffing much that I scared and dropped the compendium. Wow.

NH! UH.
Not falling for this crap this time. Carl will LIVE. Trust me, im smart. In AIG.
Its cool, really. Carl will show up, maybe hurt, whatever.
But he'll live. He ALWAYS does. Like Rick. And Andrea. Aaaaand Abraham. Oh, yeah...
You do not intimidate me. AT ALL.
Cha-boom. Pleeessss print this. Ive written in enough, trust me. Like a whole 4 times.
Sooo. Is it because of my age? thats cool. I can change it. Dont be a pervert now, Kirkmaniac Or that new guy (whom is not better than Sina in any way, that fat mothersucker...) Mackiewicz... Shawn... WTF ever.
Soooo... loved the wraparound, I couldnt get that dang other variant B..... Tell Andrew J. Shaw he AINT something... because he AINT. He is a jerk. A very, very, very, VERY, VERY, jerkyjerkyjerky.
Ok..... CHABOOM. I think thats all...
Jaylan Schmidt.
12 year old in the NC. (again, you jerk).
CHOOM! (Congrats to Invincible 100)

Yeah, it's the truth I've been ducking Jaylan. But his unorthodox spelling/grammar/mental state is like reading Kerouac's first draft of On the Road. I really hope your mom pins this to the fridge. CHABOOM.

I think that's our first two chaboom letter... and there's even a choom thrown in. Nice. Also, I wonder if you'd think Sina was so much better than Sean if you knew that he was keeping you from being printed all this time? CHA--oh, never mind.

Okay, I have never officially written a comic before, so forgive my shortcomings. I, sadly given my history as a comic book person, was introduced into the WD universe through the AMC show. After becoming addicted to it, I knew I would have to read the comic (which I had originally thought about) and again I became addicted. So in two weeks I have gotten caught up on WD show, comic, and completed the Telltale game. I must say it is extraordinary. This is a remarkable feat, considering I HATE zombies. I don't mind the old-fashioned (Voodoo witch-doctor brought dead back type) ones, but the newer (Virus) kind...disgusting. Robert Kirkman, you are maybe the best comic writer since Stan Lee. Who knew something this good could come from Image! I mean, it's Image. They are at the bottom of the comic-book totem-pole, but a good series this is. First: The style (B&W) is good, often times that style is a cheap gimmick. But WD makes it work so well. Second: I love how this is not a zombie book. It is solely about characters. EXCELLENT. Such character development in a comic book is rare. Also having just read all current WD issues, I have some past things I would like to discuss. Issue #48. Thank You. I hated Lori. A LOT. I like the TV Hershel (Sorry more, so that didn't bother me. Question, (Not criticism) If you had known the WD would have made it to #106, would you have lengthened the opening storyline and Shane? Also the fact that people get so FREAKED out when you kill off a character is the best praise (You probably know this). When a character is poorly written, no one cares when they die. When a character is written very well, many people care. So this means you are an top-notch writer. That is all for now. Keep up the good work.

Robert The Unwise.

Robert, any wise words for Robert? I mean, he likened you to Stan "The Man" Lee.

That's certainly flattering, true believers! To answer Robert's

question, YES... had I known the series would continue this long I would have totally expanded the Shane storyline. If I recall correctly... issue 7

was originally supposed to end with them finding the prison (talk about accelerated!) which would have meant no Hershel's farm, or Hershel, or Maggie, or Glenn and Maggie hooking up... a lot would have been different... but when sales were spiking up, I thought I was safe to expand the story, take my time a little.

For more insight into the behind the scenes writing process that went into this series like the passage written above, be sure to purchase *THE WALKING DEAD: THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR...* a book FILLED with issue by issue original plots and commentary that will be released as soon as my irresponsible ass gets around to finishing it.

I suck.

Also, Robert... *IMAGE COMICS* has published some of the best comics of the last TWENTY YEARS. *Savage Dragon*, *Astro City*, *Leave it to Chance*, *Age of Bronze*, *Powers*, *Chew*, *Saga*, *Fatale*, *Mara*, *Girls*, *The Sword*, *Ministry of Space*, *Fell*, *Tellos*, *Morning Glories*, *Happy!*, *Wanted*, *Rising Stars*... it's a long list. You're missing out if you're not reading a TON of *Image Comics*.

And the immortal Boof and the Bruise Crew.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

In the letter hacks a lot of people have been harping on the Negan storyline by comparing it to the Governor's, but it's obvious to me that Negan and the Governor are two very different people.

THANK YOU! (Finally.)

The Governor was an idealistic hipster whose psyche became tainted by a zombified world, but to me, Negan seems like a man who was sadistic and domineering before the zombie apocalypse ever started. While the Governor tried to create an egalitarian community using depraved methods, he had the support of most of his people because they felt he was looking out for them. Negan seems content with making everyone submissive to him, and my guess is everyone obeys him because they feel he's who they need to survive. My guess is that, before the zombies, Negan was probably a sleazy CEO, or perhaps a baseball team owner, or both, because he looks and acts like an elitist prick.

Negan speculation! Speculate more, people!

I realize that if I'm right about this I probably won't get this letter published, but I think it's important to realize the difference between Negan and the Governor. They are both evil, but different kinds of evil. The Governor is deceptive, while Negan is dictatorial. Most of the Governor's followers were blind to his perversions, while everyone in Negan's group knows exactly what kind of sick fuck Negan is. Negan's followers are too afraid to do anything about him (for now- Dwight looks like he could revolt when given the chance).

Really? You think so? Weird.

I know we've learned about a lot about the Governor's past (and I'm waiting for the third novel about him), but when are we going to learn more about Negan's past? I bet he's been a jerk all his life.

See ya,
Eric

And by the way, I'm in Venezuela, so I read your comics on my iPad using the Comixology app. I don't believe I've seen this app plugged in your letter hacks before, so I thought I'd do for you.

We plug Comixology's COMICS app all the time! We run ads for it quite frequently. If you LOVE comics but hate PAPER... Comixology is for you!

As for Negan... we'll know more about him, eventually... until then... keep reading... but when you know all about him, you can stop, I guess...

Re: the letter from 'Fatin' in 106 - Walking Dead TPB are available at the Last Word bookstores in Karachi and Lahore. Like it? Buy it!

Mikail

PS Big fan

Thanks, Mikail! TWD is available worldwide!

Yeah, stop all the downloadin'! I'm a computer!

Your excellency,

Have you had the pleasure of experiencing A MULTIPLE ORGASM IN THE EYES?! BECAUSE THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME THESE PAST FEW MONTHS! YOU SONUVABITCH! The artworks of Ottley, Adlard and Howard are smashing. That's right I said it. SMASHING DAMNIT! I can't wait for the next upcoming issue and appreciate your works. I'm hooked on all 3 comics, but I feel cheated. I know for a FACT that you've been holding out on us. You see I know you've been putting off BATTLE POPE, but come on. I NEED THAT MORE IN MY LIFE. Any-how, keep up the good work. KEEP MAKING THEM AND TLL KEEP BUYING THEM.

P.S. Would it kill you to show an Invincible toy in TWD show. Or at least a cameo of a comic or something.

Juan Gomez

I have never had the pleasure of receiving multiple orgasms in the eyes. Next letter, please.

But I was... going to comment... on his Battle Pope demand... can I? Is it okay?

Well, Juan. What I like to say in interviews is that I DO in fact have more Battle Pope stories in me. I started my career with Battle Pope and I want to END my career with Battle Pope, so once I'm bitter and washed up and can't get work anywhere and my work appeals to no one... I'll do more Battle Pope and that story up... and then I'll ride off into the sunset and become a violinist... or hang myself. Wocka wocka.

Dear Robert,

So, after Negan put the iron to Dwight's face, does he give him eye drops, or does Dwight have to use points for them? If Negan makes Dwight or any other poor schlub use his points to buy eye drops, isn't that really the hardest burn of all?

Joe Kazmer
Pittsburgh, PA

That would be a pretty Neganish thing to do, wouldn't it?

Dear Kirk,

Regarding #106, there's no way Rick's gun could've run out of ammo and clicked twice. The slide would have blown back and stayed open after ejecting the final casing. If you want to show emotion through guns clicking, you can use a double action revolver - those can go "click." I guess the round could have failed to fire and in that scenario, certain guns WOULD allow the striker or hammer to attempt

to fire the round again. If that's the case, there's still a round in the chamber and Rick needs to clear it (which he would know, from police academy and a career in

law enforcement).

This gun stuff really takes me out of the comic (and the show to some extent, with all the constant firing of handguns in underground tunnels, with no complaints of hearing loss or pain). I think you should hire a gun consultant. I'm forwarding my resume.

Mitchell Lenyo
Bloomington, IN

No attachment!

Whatever it is that caused the zombies also changed the way guns work.

Walking Dead Team,

I was introduced to TWD when season 2 premiered on AMC. I watched that episode and all of the marathon of season 1 leading up to it. When the show hit a break I caught up on the comics. When I caught up on the comics, I read the novels. I have thoroughly enjoyed all of it. Thank you.

No, THANK YOU. I'm glad you enjoyed it all.

As a brewer, I know what it is like to have fans who want to get in on the creative process. I am constantly bombarded with overzealous followers chiming in with, "You know what you should make?..." This used to annoy me. Then I realized I was being a dick. These people love what I do and they're excited about it. Also, who am I to underestimate their ingenuity? I could be missing some great ideas here.

That being said, I would like to share some of my concepts with you in the off chance that they are original and doable.

-A dream sequence where we see every living character as walkers.

Eh... don't really get the point of that.

-What happened to Lilly. (I know, I know... you're done with it)

Actually, I'm NOT... check out the third novel... hint. hint.

-A spinoff of new characters in another city, state, or country. Completely unrelated to the current story.

Heard this one before.

-The zombie of a famous person. "Hey, isn't that walker Tom Petty?"

There's a zombie in the season 2 premiere that people think looks like Tom Petty--it's the one they cut open and look inside of.

Maybe there's something there. Maybe I'm a loon. I do know one thing, though. If any group were to live in an area long enough to grow crops, somebody would have found a way to make beer. That's the only flaw I can find with the story thus far.

Keep up the good work.
Cheers!

Ryan Daffron

If you think I didn't run this letter because I like beer, you're crazy. The fine folks at Skybound would love to drink your beer, Ryan, right after we're done with a hard day's work. Like right now.

Sean and Robolicious,

Thank you for killing Glenn. I'm giving you an official six month overdue *E-mail high five* for printing my letter AND frustrating my brother (who is a long time reader as well).

I'm writing you today to congratulate Charlie on 100 issues, that's an awesome feat! Your art is spectacular, keep it up.

Also, I need to go over a few things with you and my fellow writers of Letter Hacks.

1. Michael Wallace (106) wrote to you and made some very intelligent references between TWD and the 14th Century. You gave this rather well spoken man nothing but a Ninja Jesus joke. That's a bit fucked up guys. I could understand if he was some teenage snot nosed d-bag who had no knowledgeable reference material, but this is a 65 year old man who obviously knows his history. After reading his letter my mind was rather intrigued about whether or not you had used the 14th C. as reference, or if you had even noticed the coincidence, but I got jack shit in the realm of answers.

Michael Wallace also accused Revolution of ripping off TWD. So I pointed out the universality of the ideas, THEN undercut it with a Ninja Jesus joke. If I didn't think Michael Wallace made some good ass observations, I wouldn't have run the letter in the first place.

Yeah, sometimes there's just not a lot that can be said in response to a letter... but it's still worth printing.

2. Mitchell Lenyo- you sir are a disgrace to Hoosiers. How the hell did you not notice your duplicate 2, nor the missing line break between the duplicate 2's? *Shameful head bow*

You should probably blame that on me. Like everything else.

Works for me!

3. This is the correct was to number a list.

But absolutely not the correct was to write a sentence.

Are you making fun of his typo, Sean? That's cold man, cold.

4. Kill Jesus.

Not any time soon. Too awesome.

Anyways, 106 had a nice cliffhanger- got my attention back in full swing. Let me see some well deserved Negan(itive reinforcement on Carl!

Trevin
Felton, DE

P.S. For anyone not reading Invincible- you sir/s/madam's need to rethink your life choices. Can't wait for #100!

YES! What Trevin said. You should all be reading Invincible! And Thief of Thieves, Super Dinosaur, Invincible Universe, Witch Doctor, Clone... and anything else you see with a Skybound (and/or Image) logo on it!

(Insert Ninja Jesus joke!)

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you next month, boys and girls!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Retired topics: Daryl in the comic. Kill Carl already. You killed Glenn. Negan looks like XYZ. Kirkman's a genius. Ezekiel has a tiger...

PSYCH! EZEKIEL HAS A MOTHERFUCKING TIGER. This is the world you're living in now. I'm sure I'll think of more as we wade through this month's letters. But we are declaring war on old topics and getting in with the new...

I don't even know how to follow that.

Dear sirs,

We have recently been alerted to the existence of something called "Free Fuck Day" by your periodical. Can you provide us with more information on this holiday and when it is observed? We would like to stop delivering mail on that day.

Sincerely,

The United States Postal Service

On the half birthday of Valentine's Day: August 14th.

Dear Robert and Co.,

Obviously, a baby's chance at survival in a zombie apocalypse are pretty slim. However, I think it'd be interesting to see how a baby grows up to be after it was born post-apocalypse. Do you have any plans for that? Maggie does have a bun in the oven after all...

Jeff

Maggie – the Hilltop – you just read it!

Tolstoy, Hemingway, Kirkman.

Parker Meadows

Nuff said!

Is this how we're doing things this month? Short letters... short replies? Okay.

Dear Kirkman,

Did you know that there's roughly 3,667,084 Puerto Ricans and counting in the United States? Don't you think its time for the TWD cast to encounter a "happy no problem with the end of the world kind of guy." For Christ sake it's the end of the world, and we are known to be hard to get rid of. There must be one of us still standing around. We will give you 5 more issues to integrate one to your cast or else we will be signing a petition for the Congress.

From the Disgruntled Puerto Rican Community with Equal Opportunity in Comics,

Angel Lopez
Puerto Rico

Good point. But the areas with the highest concentration of Puerto Ricans are the Northeast and southern Florida, where our story hasn't gone. Or maybe all that adobo and sofrito wafting out their kitchens smells too damn good—even to a zombie!

Is that technically racist? Borderline? It's kind of making me uncomfortable... but I don't know what

"sofrito" is so maybe that's the issue.

If you'd been to a New York street fair, you'd love those smells as much as I do. 2013: Year of the Boricua in TWD!

Regardless, I agree that the book needs more latinos... we'll be remedying that at some point soon.

Mr. Kirkman, sir--

One of the things I like about the show is that it makes me go back to the older issues to see what's different. As I perused the issues pertaining to Woodbury, I realized I may have missed something. During the attack on the prison, in issue #48, Lily kills the Governor and the Woodbury people head into the prison, never to be heard from again. Was the entire population of Woodbury involved in the attack? I'm guessing "no"--so what became of those left in the town? Is it still there, populated but Governor-less? Was it overrun by walkers? Did everyone just pick up and leave? Is it now a potential haven, or still a threat? Thanks in advance!

W. K. "Walker Bait" Bodine

Without revealing its contents, I suggest you read the third TWD novel, THE FALL OF THE GOVERNOR, for all the answers you seek. It SHOULD be out in October 2013... we'll see.

Kirkman and Co.:

Love both the comic and TV series, however I have one gripe. The military representation is seriously lacking. You had Sgt. Ford, and that's great, but now he's gone.

RIP Sgt. Abraham Ford

(Also, another retired topic: Abraham's death.)

Really though, you can't tell me that some SFOD (Special Forces Operational Detachment) operators didn't survive and are wreaking havoc on walkers and baddies like Negan throughout the countryside. Even regular ground pounding infantry type are nowhere in sight. There's no way they would tolerate Negan or the Governor.

And seriously, can we get a military technical advisor in on the TV series. Hell, drop me in there and I'll work for free. If Rick and Maggie and the rest of the group actually looked through, instead of above, those neat looking AimPoints on their rifles, they might actually be able to hit something other than the broadside of a guard tower. And they might just happen to look half-credible in a firefight.

Other than that, you guys rock.

CPT Sean Mathews, USAR

I assure you the Walking Dead TV show has the most credible of military technical advisors. The aimpoint technique you're witnessing is called "shadowing" and it's better for hitting multiple targets than looking directly through the sights. By looking ABOVE them, they're able to see a larger area and can quickly move from target to target, rather than focusing on one target and then having to refocus once the second target is located. I promise we put a tremendous amount of work into that show.

As far as military people in the comic... yeah, I'm sure there's a platoon of badassess out there somewhere mowing down zombies and baking cakes for each other

and playing pool in their downtime and having a generally awesome time. But for me, the less skilled, unprepared people are a little bit more entertaining to follow.

That’s not to say they won’t from time to time encounter people like Abraham... they’ll just be few and far between.

Is there any chance that Roger in Iowa might receive a regular feature in Walking Dead? Because in all honesty, his emotionless critique of the effectiveness of zombie weaponry gave me the best [Harsh Negan Expletive Removed in Case My Letter is Printed and I Want to Show My Daughters] laugh I have had in Walking Dead in some time (and Robert puts PLENTY of funny stuff in). But after I read, “Flame cannot be underestimated in its efficacy against a living foe,” I not only laughed hysterically out loud, but I also couldn’t help but wonder what a pairing of Roger’s blank prose would be like with artwork from “Understanding Comics” Scott McCloud supporting it. It would be like Walking Dead’s own “Two-Gun Bob” feature that Conan comics enjoy.

Regardless, please keep up the great work (especially Charlie who never ever seems to have an off issue)!

Richard Reagan

I second that. Roger in Iowa, you have an open forum. Write soon!

Thirdded.

Robert Kirkman,

First off, thank you so much for making my last name relevant! The looks I get at my local comic book store when I go to pick up my latest issue of the Walking Dead and ask them for the folder “Grimes” is priceless! I’d hope to do it myself but now my last name is known around the world!

Next, my full name given to me by parents is...Jeff Grimes, yes the same as Rick’s brother. And as you stated in the last issue of the Letter Hacks where you told someone that MAYBE Jeff is awesome, I need to correct that I AM indeed awesome, though I’m sure somebody at one time or the other has said I’m an idiot and suck. And just maybe I do lead another group against the legions of the undead and post-apocalyptic nut jobs named El Presidente and other sinister names while living in Savannah, Georgia. Coincidence....Rick outside of Atlanta..me, Jeff in Savannah, Georgia...I think not.

This shit is like Stranger Than Fiction.

All characters in The Walking Dead are fictional and any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental.

So do feel free to put Jeff in the comics or the show. And being a Grimes and possibly Rick’s brother any chance I can get compensation? How about a free subscription or heck even a t-shirt or a spot on the show?

>Ahem< All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional.

WE MADE YOU, GRIMEY!

All characters in The Walking Dead are fictional and any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental.

On the serious side though a brilliant job writing and creating the story. I’ve gotten so wrapped up in the human story of what and how people change in such a scenario I sometimes forget that “walkers” are even a part of it. And no complaints about who you kill off either, that’s life in that world so feel free to kill away...just not anymore of us Grimes.

Since you write both the comics and for the show and both are in their own separate universes so to speak, does it become difficult to keep the two separate?

Thanks for the hard work with it all and giving my wife a reason to visit a comic book shop with me!

Jeff Grimes
Savannah

All characters in The Walking Dead are fictional and any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental.

Writing for the show and the comic is sometimes a little confusing, but for the most part they’re pretty easy to separate... mainly because the cast is almost completely different.

Dear Kirkman and others,

Please, please, PLEASE DO NOT HURT AND/OR KILL THE TIGER IF IT IS IN FACT REAL IN THE COMICS. I’m still reeling from the dead cat way back when the crazy twins were still around, and I got instant anxiety thinking that another animal will be hanging out in the Walking Dead universe. Hurting animals is not cool, man.

Keep up the otherwise good work,
T.P.

I think the tiger will be the one doing the hurting... stay tuned.

Dear Walking Dead Crew,

Long time reader, first time writer. In issue #107, you opened the letters page with a joke about the new character Ezekiel. That got me and my wife thinking. So using my Bible Concordance and the Walking Dead Character Guide (and the newer issues) we made a list of all the characters who share names with people from the Bible. To the best of our knowledge, it is as follows:

- Aaron
- Abraham
- Alexander
- Andrew
- Ben (presumably short for Benjamin)
- David
- Ethan
- Ezekiel
- Gabriel
- Jesus also known as Paul (a two-fer!)
- Jim (presumably short for James)
- Judith
- Mark
- Mikey (presumably short for Michael)
- Pete (even if he said “Never Peter.” presumably short for Peter)
- Phillip
- Rachel
- Thomas

The criteria being that the names had to be for a person. If you include places you can add Beth and Dale. Anyway, by our calculations it comes out to something like 21% of your characters share names with people in the Bible. Now you know.

So until we see a zombie named Lazarus make ours The Walking Dead,

Jamin (Yes, that’s a name from the Bible, too...Feel free to use it) and Susan Hillwig
Saint Clair Shores, Michigan

Weirder still, no one involved in the publication of THE WALKING DEAD has a Biblical name. So, we’re all going to Hell, I guess. Is that how it works?

I think that’s one of the rules... commandments... whatever they’re called... so yeah.

If you haven’t already, check out THEWALKINGDEAD.COM! Lots of cool reportage on the comic, TV show, merchandise, cartoon, Broadway musical, flamethrower and more!

-Sean Mackiewicz

It’s my most favoritest website ever. EVER.

NOW... if you’ll turn your attention to the pages following this letters column you’ll see a way cool preview for a way cool new book from IMAGE COMICS by the talented creative team of GREG RUCKA and MICHAEL LARK called LAZARUS... it’s going to be another Instant Image Classic so be sure to purchase that fine comic when it comes out. If you’re kicking yourself for missing the debut of SAGA or MANHATTAN PROJECTS or FATALE... don’t let yourself miss out on this one.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back, letter hacks. No funny business this go-around. Let's get talking tiger.

I get that it's zombies. It's fantasy. But the tiger thing is ridiculous. The amount of food he'd have to be feeding it each day to keep it docile enough to have as a pet would be astronomical. There's no way anyone would have that much food to spare in that world. We're talking a week or more of human rations every day. I mean even in the zombie apocalypse world that's jumping the shark.

And I don't mean to be Mr. Quick-to-correct, but tigers don't roar.

Ezra
Birmingham, AL

Wait, you're saying Tiger's DON'T roar? Come on, man. That's not even remotely true. Tiger's roar like crazy. You can get on Youtube and see video after video of those things roaring. I'll be the first to admit that keeping a tiger in captivity is not at all practical in any way... and is very difficult. But it can be done... and I think we went a long way toward explaining it in this very issue.

The food thing was covered. Tigers in captivity eat around seventy pounds of meat a week, not a day... a week. A lot of people get that mixed up.

That's a lot, yes... but the Kingdom has resources.

Your world of the walking dead is as real as any ever created to support an epic tale. It rivals worlds created by J.R.R.Tolkien, Frank Herbert, C.S.Lewis and Lewis Carroll for the memorability, depth and detail of its landscape and characters yet it manages to create equal fantasy using details we're already familiar with. Quite a feat, quite a tale. The fact that no one speaks the word "zombie" is a testament to the tale's existence outside of the standard genre. We could easily be reading an alternate newspaper.

Then after reading issue 108, I feel as if Batman just flew in on his BatGlider with a bag of Bat-a-rangs. I'm not feeling this Ezekiel at all.

I'll give it a few dozen more issues to come around and change my mind, but I'm telling you, that may be it...

David R. Strong

Ezekiel is awesome. Thanks for offering to give it "a few dozen more issues." That's... roughly 36 issues right? Who's to say Ezekiel will even still be ALIVE then? But honestly, after reading this issue, I hope the character is starting to make a little more sense. He was always meant to be over the top... so that when his backstory was revealed, he seemed almost like a completely different person. We're going to be having a lot of fun with this guy.

108 just came out. The same day as Pope Francis becoming the 266th Pope, congrats, you planned this didn't you? Speaking of Popes... this is pretty effed, are you ready? According to the Prophecy of the Popes, written in the 12th century (!), the 266th Pope to be elected will be the FINAL pope, and will oversee the church as the "City of Seven Hills" is destroyed! We could be looking at end times soon... what do you think about that? I'm not looking forward to it, I'd rather it happen after I'm dead. The book will be done by then right?

Teaghan, British Columbia, (that's in Canada).

Yes, this book will definitely end after you're dead. When we all bathe in the lifeblood of newborns and your comic collections are rendered instantly meaningless by forces that can't be understood. Like Galactus.

Remember the prophecy that this book will have aliens in it by issue 75... because I will have run out of ideas by then? Well... that didn't happen either. Mostly.

Sean and Robert,

I love everything you all are doing on TWD. I really do. I love the direction and all your decisions you make in regards to the storyline and the comic. I look forward each and every month to it. BUT, I gotta say. I'm pretty sick and tired of the, what I assume is obligatory, wasted space that follows Letter Hacks. Almost always plugging other obscure Image comics. I get it. Buy Image Comics. A lot of people

read TWD and I understand it's a good opportunity to push other comics that need better sales or others that will otherwise fail. But can't you all do that on just 1 page and not 4? This month's issue #108, you all waste 4 pages of what could otherwise be used for more Walking Dead or Letter Hacks, maybe even a short story tying up a loose end from earlier in the series or maybe even a flash back or flash forward. I don't know, ANYTHING ELSE. Doing the math, that's 4 pages each month of essentially the same thing. Multiply that by 12 and you got 48 pages of practically wasted space for the year. That's enough space to put 2 more full issues of TWD out. This is gross negligence on part of Image and someone should probably be fired. Starting with Sean. I'm fairly certain I speak for 99% of the people when I say, please for the love of God and all that is holy. Stop wasting space and please print an additional 2-3 more pages of TWD each month. I thank you for your time and keep up the GREAT work.

Charles Rogers

Is it gross negligence to run paid ads (like BIOSHOCK INFINITE, available now!), or promote our own Skybound products (like THE WALKING DEAD: ASSAULT iOS app or INVINCIBLE UNIVERSE #1, available now!), all of which bring revenue into Skybound?... Instead of generating additional content, which costs time and money and is tangential to the Walking Dead story? Sorry, man, but that's a completely unreasonable request. \$2.99 has always given you a cover, 22 interior pages, and at least 2 pages of Letter Hacks. Hey, and those ads are in glorious COLOR! Not even cheap-ass B&W like the rest of the book!

Seriously. This comic is \$2.99 when most are more than that these days... a lot of 22 page comics are \$3.99. The ads in the back aren't WASTED SPACE, they're EXTRA PAGES. A comic is a standard 22 pages in length and most are actually 20 pages now (and often those are \$3.99). I could honestly take up the rest of this letters column talking about how wrong you are.

It's like complaining about the credits at the end of the movie, saying, "Why can't I get more movie!" Or complaining about those stupid commercials that keep interrupting TV... "If you cut those... you could do almost an entire other episode worth of stuff over the course of three episodes, what gives?!"

It's just nutty, sorry. You want more, we get it. But it's math. It takes us a month to do 22 pages. We could do 33 pages... and the book would take six or so weeks to do instead of four... so you'd get the book less often. We could do six issues a year at 44 pages instead of 12 issues a year at 22. There's only so much time in the day.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

OK SO UM I AM RELATIVELY NEW TO TWD FANDOM AND FOUND THE COMICS THROUGH THE SHOW. SO JUST OK THANK YOU ROBERT AND THE REST OF THE WALKING DEAD TEAM. YOU GUYS ARE AMAZING. SORRY FOR THE CAPITAL LETTERS AND THE INCOHERENT GRAMMAR. THIS IS THE BEST WAY I CAN EXPRESS MY LOVE.

Ok...I'm calm. But another thing I have to get out of my system... THIS COMIC RULES SO FUCKING MUCH AND IS SO BADASS I LITERALLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF (OK NOT LITERALLY BUT LITERALLY!!!!!!)...

Really, I love character developments, the gruesomeness and the humanness of everyone. Obviously I suppose these are part of your aims, but I want to emphasize and reiterate that everything about it so brilliant. It was SO MUCH TORTURE when Negan was taunting Rick about Carl. In my head all I could think of was "he's dead, they've killed him - no - godammit, I hate you!!!"

As a 17 year old girl in the UK, unfortunately I'm scarce on TWD comic fans as this is my first comic ever. Nobody ever introduced them to me, as I just felt like reading them at some point when the show began. Thank you so much for this wonderful introduction to comics and I am so so excited for the future issues.

I'm rambling... OK I have some questions:

Will any of you adopt me? (I am completely house trained and as much as I love my parents, it would be really great to creep over your shoulder and watch you work)

Absolutely not.

Nope.

How do you come up with the volume titles? (I really adore them)

I ask Robert for them.

I get them directly from the devil.

Robert, have you ever let fans stroke your beard?

That will never happen.

Will you let Eugene find ~love~ even if it isn't Rosita? (Come on, a super intelligent man that intentionally uses a mullet to hide his utter geniusness, now that is just a whole new level of smarticles and attractiveness)

Agreed... and we'll see.

These are important questions that need answers.

This is my first time to send a letter and I hope this gets published! Also, it's 4am and I've been catching up with the TV show. (**Season 3 spoilers**)!?!?!??? ALSO, I should get sleep to revise in the morning instead of intense Google searching/stalking the tv cast and you guys, as I have my exams soon. But it's fine, TWD, keeps me calm. Shame there's no chance of a zombie apocalypse to get me out of exams, heh...

Thanks!

Jennisa
Cambridge

It's unlikely but I wouldn't say there's NO chance...

Reading the latest issue I started to think about how people in the TWD comic must see this Rick guy as we see The Governor and Negan. You know, here comes this guy leading a group with his uneasy attitude after so much struggle, MISSING A FREAKING HAND, followed by a one-eyed kid, women with katanas and such. They don't know the myth behind the man, it must be terrifying to trust him. Maybe they call him nicknames behind his back like The Sheriff or The Commissioner.

Make mine Kirkman! Everyone go read Invincible!

Gabriel Diaz

I love this letter.

It's awesome because it responds to itself.

Gentleman,

Thank you for writing such a superb graphic novel series. I have thoroughly enjoyed the nuanced characters you have created. I became a fan of the show and then an addict of the graphic novel series.

I appreciate that you are able to dispatch characters that not only we as reader avidly followed, but that you have put a lot of work into creating. How much of an emotional hit do you take when you choose a storyline that will cause the death of a character you have developed? Are you able to detach yourself since the series is the actual item you have nurtured and the characters are just the catalyst?

It's upsetting. I mean, it's not like a real person dying... but it sucks. It doesn't really hit me until I'm writing issues they're not in. From time to time I think about something to do with Glenn and I'm like, "Well, damn it."

But I'm not in a support group or anything.

A gentleman in Letter Hacks issue #108 with some experience with firearms questioned how Rick's semi-automatic firearm would have clicked in issue #106. He stated that the slide would lock to the rear. He is only partially correct.

The slide SHOULD lock to the rear. This mechanical feature can fail, but rarely does so. The most common reason for the slide not locking open is the shooter's thumb is pressing on the slide release (happens to me sometimes when shooting a compact).

A trained shooter when hearing the click should immediately pull the slide to the rear. During this process the finger that is activating the slide release is usually removed from it thus allowing the slide to lock to the rear. The shooter would recognize this and drop the magazine and reload with a fresh one.

A "high speed" shooter or well-trained LE officer would shout "cover" on any weapons failure and announce "up" once the failure is cleared.

I look forward to more greatness. Keep making us care enough about the characters to mourn when they pass.

Stay Frosty,
Jason Pizza

I'll do my best. Thanks for the gun info.

Robert,

I hate to admit it, but I have to: I'm a little scared. Not of Ezekiel and his tiger, nor Negan, not even you! What I'm scared of is myself, and the loooong legacy I have to live up to, in letters and witticisms, over the years I've been writing and seeing print here in the column!! I feel like I'm spent, like I've nothing left to say. The comics haven't changed. That is, they haven't dropped in quality. This issue, in fact, #108 to be precise, was maybe the most stunningly different Charlie Adlard work ever! Much appreciated by this fan. A human side to Michonne? Someone named Spencer repenting? Face it, TWD fans, this one had it all. The end sequence with Ezekiel, said tiger, and Rick confronting ol' half-face guy: Had me thinking Star Wars! Guess it just reminded me of a scene from Empire Strikes Back. I wonder, how is Kirkman on Star Wars? I dunno why I ask; SW is still at Dark Horse, soon to return to Marvel. Does make

me think that maybe Skybound is too limiting to the works of Robert Kirkman, though. Already Jonathan Hickman has gone from nowhere to Image to writing FF and Avengers at Marvel! I think if you had the jump now, or at least opened up to the possibility of working somewhere else again other than just Image: Things would be different. But I won't tell you how to run your own career. Just musing! Today's indie comic pick is: The High Ways #3, by John Byrne; I think we're both fans of his, but then who isn't?

Andrew J. Shaw

I was like, "Someone named Spencer? What?" Then I noticed Andrew J. Shaw wrote this letter and it made sense. You forget characters way too easily, man.

I love me some Star Wars.

And I disagree doing books anywhere other than Image would help my career. Image is the best place. And my company, Skybound, isn't limiting at all. I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT.

Tell me about it...

Hi,

I just read the last 70 issues (in about 3 days) which is the most I've ever read of any comic, and its been a great ride so far. So thank you for introducing me to a medium I'll probably spend countless hours of my life on, as if TV, movies, video games, and the internet hadn't already consumed my feeble existence! After reading issue after issue, I was hoping my question would be answered but it hasn't, so.... here it is: Why the hell hasn't Rick done something with that useless nub of his on his right arm?!?! I mean, if redneck Merle can figure out how to make a weakness into a weapon, why the hell can't Rick? An attachment for a shield, knife, hatchet, hook, machete, heck even a fork or a spoon is better than a useless nub!

Its gotten to the point that I cringe every time Rick gets into a fist fight with someone because I know he's always fighting with one hand. It just seems like an obvious choice for Rick to not waste an appendage the way he has been, he knows he's at a disadvantage why not do something about it? Are hooks and knives as appendages not Rick's style? Does he feel it would make him too intimidating? Yeah right! Rick knows he's the man, when he gives orders he expects them to be carried out.

I can understand now why it would be weird to add a weapon to his nub after all this time since he should've thought of it a LONG time ago.. So did you just fuck up or was there a reason you decided to leave Rick a one handed weakling?

Maybe there's still time! Maybe Eugene will think its time for Rick to get an upgrade! Oh shit, now it will never happen.

Well Fuck you very much for getting me into comic books and for chopping off Rick's damn hand so early on and leaving him helpless this entire time!

I love you,
Bye.

Stephen G.
Fort Worth, TX

I think there have been many issues that have proven Rick to be anything but helpless now that he's missing a hand. I think it worked with Merle in the show, but I've always felt it would be strange for Rick to have a knife attachment on his hand. It would just seem farfetched.

But now that there's a tiger in the book...

Let me begin by saying that I love the comic, TV show hasn't been of the same quality all the time, with stupid characters hogging the spotlight, like Andrea, but the comic tends to keep things good and interesting, by focusing more on the stronger more capable characters , you know, like Andrea.

anyway, onwards and upwards, Ezekial has a tiger, this leads me to speculate that he's really just a zookeeper who convinced everyone he was a big shot, how else would he know how to tame a tiger like that, not that I would judge him if he was, doesn't matter who he was before, he's stepping up to the plate now.

and that stuff about Dwight...damn, I wanna know just what is exactly so great about being one of Negan's wives, it seems HORRIBLE

anyway, great issue but since I didn't have much to say this time i'll throw in a plea to be included in the Hacks...please, and a fuck you, because all the cool kids are doing it

Sincerely,
Ian from Illinois

Ian, you win this month's game of Closest to the Pin. Thanks for playing.

Seriously... wow. That is creepy. You totally figured Ezekiel out from reading 108? That's just nuts. Very impressive, man.

Stay safe out there and see you next month in our ad-supported, zombie-filled funny book!

-Sean Mackiewicz

You know what... just to make that guy happy, next issue is 48 pages, no ads! (not really). We hope to see you all back here next month. Thanks for reading.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back to the Greatest Comic in the World. This issue is going out the door right before Memorial Day weekend, but we'll be plenty busy this summer. More on that after the letters...

Dear Mr. Kirkman:

I would like to thank you for awakening this comic nerd's inner self that I never knew existed. About episode two of season one, a student of mine (who knew my affinity for reanimated dead folks) suggested I watch The Walking Dead, I did and now I have been converted to a convention going, horror con following nerd, thanks a lot. It used to be all football coaching for me because I kept my inner nerd locked unknowingly deep inside. I looked around to make sure no one I knew was watching when I picked up the first hardback trade novel of your crack-like zombie series, two years later my wife (also a teacher) and I have burned through every issue, wait like little school kids for candy for the next issue, own the original T.V. in Herschel's house from season two, made a trip to Senoia, have gone to two conventions to meet cast members, have a large collection of The Walking Dead memorabilia, dozens of autographs from cast members, and have turned half the staff at our school (and students) on to The Walking Dead. I even have scenes from season two and three on my classroom wall painted to scale. Thanks for taking up time I didn't have to spare, but more importantly thank you for forcing my family of five to come together if for no other reason than to watch and read The Walking Dead. You've also made me more hip with my students.

Thanks,
Paul
Dexter, Missouri

We're flattered by your passion. But if any of Paul's students are reading this, please confirm his hipness with an emoticon or hash tag or a tumblr in his honor.

You're welcome, Paul! Thanks for all the support.

Can you explain to me why on page 9 of issue 109. Gregory, upon recalling that he has already met Maggie and that she arrived with the little girl that we know as sophia, then goes ahead and asks whether her name is molly to which maggie then confirms this is her or sophia's name?

And also do i get some kind of cool merchandise for paying attention in class?

Steve

Gregory is a narcissist, he doesn't remember anyone's names because he only cares about himself. It's a gag... it's happened before.

Dear Skybounders,

i write to you, because like (most) everyone else that writes in, i love this here comic book. ive never written into a letters column of any sort before, so yes, I DO feel honored :) just kidding ... sort of. heh

What more can be said in a gushing heap of praise that hasnt already been said? Well, i for one am in my 40s and cannot get enough of this book.

As i tell anyone that will listen, this book is NOT ABOUT ZOMBIES! its about PEOPLE and how they deal with getting on with life after the world goes to shit! Some people seem to have a hard time with that, those people i cannot help. My desire to read each new issue is so strong that I will not leave my LCS' parking lot until i have read the issue at LEAST once. Reason being that if i happen to die in a car crash on the way home, i will die PISSED that i didnt get to read the last issue released in my lifetime. Morbid? perhaps, but it's the truth!

So in closing, keep printing `em, we'll keep buying `em!

Your pal,

Eric
ThoseBackPages

@ThoseBackPages finally HITS these back pages! Eric's a good dude who we met at NYCC last year and has been a great online advocate of TWD and Invincible. Thanks for reading, buddy! Now get back home. This issue needs to be read again pronto.

Drive safely!

Dear Sirs,

I'll skip the usual praise for the show and comics, both are amazing, enough said. My gripe is with the abortion of a game that is Walking Dead: Survival Instinct! I'm assuming you have signed over the licensing to Activison and praying you had no say at all as that game is rotten to the core. As a cynical cash grab it simply can't be beat, With such rich source material that game should have been amazing! I could go on about the ridiculous AI, the shoddy graphics or the virtually non-existent storyline, or the completely expendable survivors (not enough room in the car? Later, no dialogue, no consequences, nothing!) but I'll simply work myself up again over wasting the best part of £40 on this garbage. If you don't believe me look up the reviews, it's been universally panned. What gives?!

A disappointed fan,
Daniel Hodgson

Sorry to hear that. Have you played the Telltale game yet? That's a good one! We got more of that coming!

AMC oversaw the production of that game while myself and Team Skybound were far more active in the making of the Telltale game. I think Survival Instinct had merits as a cool way of getting more Daryl, who is a popular character from the TV show, but in the end, I will admit that it fell short of hitting the mark.

Dear the Walking Dead

being a big fan of the AMC show i recently decided to pick up the comic. my plan was originally just read up to the point the show had gotten to so i could see the differences, but i found myself at the comic shop the very next day for more.

i just got to the part where Jesus is introduced. Jesus has been my own nickname since high school (presumably for the same reason as your character). it was kinda like watching Rick kick my ass. AWESOME.

furthermore, can i have a comic Andrea action figure with scars and optional Dale hat?

Jesus

The second series of TWD comic figures hits stores this June, including Glenn in riot gear, the Governor, one of Michonne's pets and Penny (with severed heads!!!). Beyond that, we've some more special plans, which you can hear about first on thewalkingdead.com.

I'll add that there is an Andrea figure coming in the TV show line this fall. Could a comic version be far behind...?

Come on, Kirkman. Get back to what made this successful in the first place. Don't turn into a big-headed George Lucas resting on the laurels of his previous successes. Are you that surrounded by yes-men that you can't come up with inspired ideas anymore? A black man on a throne with a tiger? Ridiculous. You seem to have this God-complex and think "anything I come up with will be awesome, no matter how non-sensical..." Give me a break.

Write compelling, engaging, realistic plots again. For the sake of your fans and your series. It's what made people love it in the

first place.

After the TV show came on, for the comic, you had this great idea of...Negan! Wow, it's the governor...again.

Alright. Hold up, Ariel. We get letters like yours ALL THE TIME. Does that mean we're doing something wrong? Quite possibly. But you do a massive amount of editorializing that does nothing by undercut your quite possibly valid assessment. So let's do something different. I'm going to run another letter right in the middle of yours to show you how someone can be critical, but also substantive. Take it away, John!

Hi Team,

I actually feel obliged to express my praise to the whole creative team at TWD after the opening five pages of #109.

It was an unexpectedly reflective moment that provided the reader with a brief and welcome respite in an 'era' (the last dozen issues) that have been oppressive and utterly bleak (but quite entertaining; I immensely enjoy reading the unpredictable Negan and his dialogue...but the man really is a scary asshole).

So back to my praise of #109: #106 and #107 moved at almost TOO brisk of a pace; each character and story thread had been allotted 1 or 2 pages each to 'check in' with the audience to advance the plot, and that's about it. TWD works SO much better when an issue concentrates on only one or two themes/story elements/characters, and a couple of the past issues read like simple plot progression.

If you just flip through the first five pages of #109, you see the devastated face of Maggie turn from despondent to wearing a genuine smile, and it momentarily pulled me out of the plot and gave me that 'feeling' TWD is so good at: to see fleeting moments of happiness and beauty despite nightmarish circumstances. Sometimes the kindness of a stranger reminds and reaffirms the reality that not everybody is evil, and they are all sharing pain; it's probably one of the few things they can all relate with!

The scene ended with a beauty bottom panel with Maggie...after Brianna walks away...the panel below shows a solitary Maggie walking back toward the shade and the comfortable familiarity of Glen and his headstone, but it seems after her talk with Brianna that she now realizes that choosing to dwell on painful memories is a dark, dreadful, and lonely existence when behind her is a new community with the prospect of a brighter future (and the symbol ic pencil shading is spectacular)! I hope she chooses a path that reveals a new stronger Maggie without the love of her life (Lord knows Sophia could use it).

It was like you said in one letter hack where you were being cussed at for killing off Abraham, and you made the most valid counter-point that sometimes a character can have a stronger impact on the story by their ABSENCE! It's not like the characters are forgotten... we now witness what it is like for the people left behind to cope, which can be even more emotional than the actual death itself.

Maybe it's just me, but I feel that Volumes 17 and 18 have been kind of short-changed simply because "it's just the Governor all over again". Perhaps it is a leap of logic too far for some readers to jump, but it is possible that the anarchy resulting from the apocalypse would lead to groups of people who don't play nice.

For what it's worth, I'm still a satisfied reader.

John Misner
Ottawa, Ontario
...Yes the Ottawa, Ontario in Canada (the nations capital for trivia buffs, heh)!

A well reasoned critical assessment. Write in any time, John!

Ok. Back to Ariel. Now John's letter was probably a good deal more positive than you would have liked. But there are legit criticisms, including the whole Governor Negan thing (what if he just started calling himself Governor Negan? Would that make you guys even angrier?), but all of which are laid out in a non-hysterical manner. Miss Manners lecture over.

Where were all of these people when Rick's crew was searching around? Negan's group is so large and dominating that: Oh! Rick's never seen them! His compound didn't run into them until Rick's group arrived! Jesus, I've bought every issue in one form or another and have been a loyal fan from the start. I've petitioned everyone I know to read and support your stuff. But if this ship doesn't right itself soon, you've lost a loyal fan. I'm sure you'll gain a ton of idiotic bandwagoners for a short time, but if this keeps up...

And I don't follow Sina's junk, how did his "branching out" work? I told you on twitter to force him to stay in your book. It was his best (and only) shot at notoriety.

And now you're taking shots at Sina?!

I digress. Fix your stuff.

No no no no. Hold the fuck up. I'm going to have to run ANOTHER LETTER IN YOUR LETTER.

Hi Sean,

I hope all is well. Please inform Ariel that "branching out" is difficult. Life was easier when I could just spar with the Letter Hacks folks and work overtime with Robert to make sure the books were the best they could be. Now, all I do is get paid to draw dudes

punching dudes, Jake and Finn from Adventure Time, and hang out with Zac Efron. That last part was a lie.

Also: tell Andrew J Shaw that I miss him, and do an unnecessary hashtag in my honor.

Love, Sina

#BurnTheOrphanage #LOVE #hashtag #enoughisenough

Sooner than later.
Ariel

You've sure given me a mean case of the reds today.

Well, that was fun. A couple points, Ariel. First, Ezekiel is AWESOME and his strangeness is meant to show just how far this world has gone and it SHOULD be jarring and out of place. Second, Negan is like The Governor just like The Red Skull is like Doctor Doom. They're both villains, they're both bad dudes, but they're very different. Ten years down the line, if they encounter another bad guy who leads his own group are people going to say "it's Negan and The Governor all over again?!" Negan is a very different person, and those differences are going to become more and more apparent as the story continues on.

Hi, just curious, do you guys have anything special planned for the 10 year anniversary of TWD? Special comic issue perhaps?

Keep up the polarizing work!

Greg Reed

July. You are not prepared.

SPEED ROUND!

Where are all the overweight zombies at? I've done extensive research to find that people are in fact, fat. Inclusion necessary, I do not wish to view your lies!

Jordan Peel

There are tons of fat zombies in the comic... less so in the show, as, frankly, it's hard to ADD to big people to make them look like zombies. Keep in mind, to make those walkers look real, you have to build stuff on top of real people... you start adding to people my size, and well... we start to look a bit too padded, if that makes sense.

Do roamers poop? We are twoish years in their time and one would think two years of feasting on human remains would fill up a belly and all that flesh has to go somewhere.

Kiersten Nicholls

I've covered this before, I like to think they're always pooping... undigested bits of flesh... it just passes right through. Fun!

I know you have confirmed Jeff Grimes will not appear in the comics.. but would he ever appear on the TV show? it would be interesting to watch. The Merle & Darryl aspect is a fan favorite partially because no one knows their fates... the same could be done with Jeff Grimes?

Arman Rafi
British Columbia, Canada

Make it so!

Man, I just don't get this obsession with Jeff Grimes. Who knows if TV Rick even HAS a brother?

Also, I'm intrigued by the Brianna Character in #109. Will she be the new character to bring humanity to the comics like Dale used to be? Looking forward to seeing what happens there.

Joshua Willingham

Stay tuned! I love Brianna and her unique hairline!

See you all next month! Skybound will be at Image Expo July 2nd AND San Diego Comic Con July 18-21st, so we hope to see you all there. Now get to turning the page and check out a preview of Skybound's newest series, GHOSTED!

@SeanMackiewicz

Oh, cool... you're signing off with your twitter handle... good idea! Is that what the kids are doing these days?

@RobertKirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

These past two issues have given me the jitters. Let's move on to more pleasant news. We are in the thick of con season now. If you're reading this on the day it came out (and why wouldn't you be if you are indeed a TRUE FAN?), we're on the other side of Image Expo (What news! What excitement! Did you catch all of that ALL OUT WAR news?!?!) and within spitting distance of San Diego Comic Con. (More news! More excitement! Did you catch all of those Skybound announcements?!?!)

ALL OUT WAR!! WOO! Pretty cool, right? It's going to be CRAZY!

Robert and Co.

After reading a letter in the Letter Hacks from issue 110 I noticed a bit of a "continuity" error and had to write in. In the letter "Jennisa" (from Cambridge) asked if you had ever let a fan stroke your beard, to which you replied "That will never happen". Well sir, I gotta drop dime on you buddy. Baltimore Comic Con 2009. While you were so graciously signing my comics you remarked upon how spiky my hair was and asked if you could touch it. I said you could as long as I could stroke your beard. I was pretty surprised at myself for my quick thinking and bold request (let's face it, that'd be like asking to touch Zeus's beard!) but you agreed.

So maybe you should have written "That will never happen AGAIN" 'cause I got your beard-card! Actually, we never talked about it... was that your first time? Anyway, I suppose you could just not print this letter to keep the truth hidden. I can only hope Mr. Mackiewicz will sneak it in!

No way, buddy. I like to run freaky shit like this FIRST.

Oh, and I love the comic. And Invincible. Keep on rockin' in the free world gents!

Dominic
Virginia

I just want to state, definitively, for the record... that the events described in this letter NEVER happened. I think. My memory isn't what it used to be.

Dudes, don't kill Ezekiel please. Or his tiger. Come on, I know you're already thinking about it. Killing off a fan favorite for shock value? That's what you do, Kirkman. But come on. This is Ezekiel we're talking about, he has a friggin' TIGER. You're not going to kill either of them. If you kill Ezekiel or Shiva, I will come down on you like the hammer of Thor. The thunder of my vengeance will echo through the corridors of the Skybound offices like the gusts of a thousand winds.

Thank you, and keep up the excellent work.
Brian Hutchison

The only thing that echoes through the Skybound offices is...silence. Your thunderous vengeance would be HIGHLY disruptive to our staff of specialized prima donnas who all have VERY specific needs when a new Costco order is put through. And look, now we're out of gourmet root beer. Thanks for THAT, Hutchison...

I really should spend more time in that office...

Okay, so just like everyone and their grandma, I am obsessed with the Walking Dead. It's easily my favorite book! But I have one problem, and no, it's not Ezekiel or Shiva; it's Carl's new Emo hair style! I understand that it's covering the gaping hole in his face, but he looked a lot cooler wearing his head hole with pride. Even the bandage over it was cooler! Just throwing that out there. But, of course, you all know what you're doing!

Logan Slone

Emo didn't really explode in the real world until 2004. Right after the time the zombie apocalypse started in The Walking Dead. So Carl never got to enjoy a misspent youth idolizing Fallout Boy and Dashboard Confessional, or borrow Rick's copy of Pinkerton to find out where emo REALLY started. So what you're really doing is projecting your own discomfort with emo, when Carl is blameless, and is actually birthing that style before your very eyes.

I just want to state for the record that in my mind... the zombie apocalypse started in some nondescript time period that will forever be undetermined. Was it 2003? Or 2010? Hopefully... you can't tell.

Also, Carl's new hairdo is AWESOME.

Hey Guys,

I was rereading from Hunters era to present for fun earlier tonight and realized Andrea still doesn't know Carl killed Ben! Will this be addressed soon?

I like the character of Jesus a lot, I hope you do more with him, he's really great, best new character for sure.

Thanks a lot for everything and fuck you for Glenn.

Jon Hoel

Yeah, sorry about that. I'm sure Carl would prefer that information remain secret but I doubt that it will forever...

After reading the last Letter Hacks i've come to realize that people respect their opinions more than they embrace an experience. We are all entitled to our critical judgment, but, is it really worth it? Why compare TWD to stuff from Tolkien, and then in the next sentence talk that witty-hipster smack on Ezekiel, a baby character, promising, but a baby. TWD is an experience independent from our thoughts, and roughly crafted to perform an aesthetic reaction in a 30 page momentary cataclysm. I don't know, maybe it's just me, but those few minutes once a month, is why I keep coming back for more. Good job guys. 110 is good.

P.S: I miss Glenn, I really do.

Nestor

Criticism is awesome. I value it a great deal. I'm not going to change the direction of the story just because a few people dislike it enough to write in, but it's great hearing what certain people like and don't like. Personally, I really enjoy having a place where people aren't afraid to tell me I'm terrible and have ruined something I spend a great deal of time working on. It keeps me humble.

Snap judgments come with the territory. I'm pretty sure sometimes people send in letters to us without even reading what they wrote. Imagine the misunderstandings that could result from THAT?

You guys printed my letter where I said tigers don't roar. Specifically, I meant tigers don't roar at prey as you showed it doing. They make loud noises that are like roars to communicate with other tigers. However, unless Ezekiel has a whole herd of tigers, it wouldn't be communicating. When they attack they make more of a hissing sound or a chuff. And if they are trying to intimidate they will growl to stun the prey. But it's not a roar. A lion roars. Go look on those youtube you mentioned and compare a lion roar to a tiger "roar." Tigers don't roar at prey like you depicted it doing. Thanks for printing the letter. But maybe do some research on why a reader would make a comment like that instead of jumping straight to giving him crap.

Thanks again,
Ezra
Birmingham, AL

Let's reexamine your original statement. You wrote previously (#110): "And I don't mean to be Mr. Quick-to-correct, but tigers don't roar."

First of all, you DO mean to be Mr. Quick-to-correct. What you really DIDN'T mean to be was Mr. Dead-fucking-wrong. Now how are we supposed to take your statement, which ran EXACTLY as you wrote it? The English language isn't like Japanese; we don't have 27 words for "roar." Maybe Shiva should have growled, instead...but it's not our job to fact check a hastily written letter. Man up, and take the L.

Mackiewicz does have you on a technicality there. You did say they don't roar... you were wrong.

Now the issue at hand. "Tigers don't roar at prey." WRONG AGAIN. Tigers do use their roars to communicate with other tigers, and you know what... that is actually the PRIMARY use of the roar, and they are "more likely" to growl or hiss at prey just before an attack, but the roar is also used to intimidate if a tiger feels threatened, and the low frequency sound generated by a tiger's roar is also believed to be used to stun and even temporarily paralyze it's prey.

Are we done here?

Dear Walking Dead Co,
Ok, I've written you a couple times before, mostly about Glenn's death (which I'm still mad about), but this time I'd like to talk to you about a particular group of people who have been grossly unrepresented in the series. Teenagers. As a long time fan, reading since I was eight, I've noticed that the range of character ages goes from like four to eight, and then skips all the way to eighteen with Maggie and Billy. Where are all the teens? Julie and Chris were not enough for me. They were too insane. Although I did know kids like that, except instead of killing each other after sex they drank each others blood (true story).

Blood: the post-coital palate cleanser.

Oh dear, are we printing this letter? Yuck.

Anyway, what I really am trying to get to is that since Glenn is gone, there's no one in the book for me to really relate with. I need another kid, preferably between fourteen and sixteen. Even if he's just a minor character, it wouldn't hurt to show how we pimply faced dorks have made it through the end times. And I refuse to believe that Rick and Co. would have never have come across a mentally stable teen. Not all of us are crazy and sex crazed, some of us are prepared for the zombies. So if you could, in the calm before the storm, throw me a bone here and give me some teenager who I can relate to. And don't be a prick and kill him after a couple issues, if you can, really delve into what you think teens would be doing about now in the apocalypse.

Michael (Hmmm, doesn't this sound like a perfect name for a teenage character?) Seriously love the series, keep it up.

There are actually plans for some teen characters already in the works, so good point, great letter and keep an eye on the future. You might have even spotted some teens mixed in with the Savivors already if you've been paying attention.

Hello there

long term reader, first time emailer

there has been so much hullabaloo about the tiger and its food consumption.

the virus only affects humans so the tiger would not be able to catch it and is surrounded by promenading stiffs on a daily basis. A quick google search reveals that tiger eat carrion. Is it such a leap of the imagination that Mr Stripey is clearing the perimeter whilst chowing down at the same time?

Al.

I am through researching tigers. (Do you know they kill more humans than any other large cat?) Let's just have the tiger feast on zombies.

We'll see a bit of that, but it's not its primary food source. Guys! The tiger makes perfect sense... just stay tuned!

Mr. Kirkman,

I have been reading (and actually buying) the book from about issue 55. I have a question, and this is not a complaint. Why are there so few zombies now?

TIGERS!

The days of the herd seem to have passed and now there are entire issues with only a scarce few zombies. I have some theories. In the beginning we had characters noticing zombies in an extreme state of decay. Maybe at this point there aren't that many new zombies being created and the zombies that were around have started to die out. Is it possible we could eventually have a Mad Max kind of world where there are no zombies? Or better, a world where enemies are captured and deliberately turned into weaponized zombies?

That's all I got, keep up the great work.

Sincerely,

Steve Ayres

The zombies are still out there, I promise. You may not have seen very many of them recently... but they're there.

Hey, doods! With the 10 year comic anniversary looming faster (Yay!), do you have anything special lined up like a midnight release ala issue 100? Are there any future plans to release a blue foil hardcover edition of Compendium 2? Thanks. Love you guys.
Ceejay P
Bellevue, NE
GO BIG RED!

We have lots of special things planned for October. That news should have come out at Image Expo, and we'll have some more exciting images for you all in the months to come. No plans for a blue foil edition, but we will have gold foil TWD compendium 2s for sale at SDCC next week. Any extra stock will be available at our online stores at THEWALKINGDEAD.COM and SKYBOUND.COM (that goes for all our exclusive items—comics, shirts, figures, etc.)

Dear dead people,

I just wanted to say a big Fuck You to all those Carl hating asses out there. Carl is continually getting crapped on in Letter Hacks. What the hell people, Carl is a badass. The Carl heavy issues 104 to107 have been a real highlight for TWD. Negan has turned into an amazing character, cheers, good things.

As far as the previews at the end of the issues being problematic, I must say that's utterly stupid and short sighted. It is TWD's job to function as the matriarch from which all other creative comic book energies flow. I must admit that I may not have given Chew, Nowhere Men, Revival or Witch Doctor a shot without TWD previews, for that I thank you.

So does that mean you're down for GHOSTED, as featured in the last issue, out TODAY?

Ezekiel is cool as hell. Great commentary on Michonne's fighting style, get that woman a rapier. Yay, Michonne has a new black guy to sleep with! Crappy TV show idea, have the AMC Michonne only sleep with white guys, shake things up.

While stopping and calling TWD the best comic out there has become quite redundant, instead I would like to stop and praise "Letter Hacks". Sina, Sean and Kirkman have answered the hate and love from your endless throng of fans for 110 issues and are a true asset for the book. TWD and Saga both have a top-shelf letters page, but what's up with Manhattan Projects and Nowhere Men? Those comics kick an unfathomable amount of ass and I need to shower them with their due praise. A letters page truly fosters a state of community between the comic and its consumer. You may forward that to Eric Stephenson.

Personally, it's a stylistic choice. I think some books, like Nowhere Men are cool complete packages, cover to cover, and a letters column would just get in the way.

Now questions....
Where is Carl's eye patch? (Enough with the 12 year old Jonah Hex thing)

Well, the eye patch wouldn't really cover MUCH, would it? There's a LOT of exposed skull there.

Are you excessively rich yet?

What qualifies as excessive? I don't think I'm quite there.

Any Thief of Thieves on AMC updates yet? Please.

I'm hoping we'll have an update of some kind soon.

Will you ever visit any Chicago Cons?

The first cons I ever did were in Chicago. I plan to go back someday. I don't know when, though.

Looking forward to August 14th!
Victor

August 14th! Man, that is quickly approaching. You know what, our next issue comes out then. Huh.

No, no, no,...

I realize this letter will never see the light of day but you are falling for the modern comic writer's disease of decompressing stories.

Nothing happened in issue 110, absolutely nothing. In years past you were able to flesh out relationships and develop characters to the same level, but without slowing the pace of the story comic. Nowadays, it takes a whole fucking issue for one conversation (ok two). Come on!!!

To be fair, I must admit that I get it, to some extent and maybe a year from now when I'm able to read the story as a whole I will be grateful for the decompression. But you have to understand my position. We have to wait a month, A MONTH, for your next installments. Often with baited breath because of a perfectly set up cliffhanger, then you finally get the damn comic, only to read something which barely moves the story along or provides any answers.

It is torture.

I'm beginning to wonder if I should wait to buy the trades every six months or so. Argh,... You're killing me here.

Oh and one more thing. I'm getting a bit sick of kirkman getting all the credit for TWD. Sorry to break it to you but Adlard is a fucking genius and his art and story telling contribute as much to this book as RK does.

Seriously, the guy needs some much deserved praise.

Frantz

I think we all agree that Charlie is the all-star on Team Walking Dead. This book would have never made it to issue 112 or even 50 without Charlie. Also, don't let this letters column fool you. We get boatloads of mail praising Charlie. Robert just won't let me print them.

That's a joke! Tell them that's a joke! Anyway, yeah... I love Charlie. He does the heavy lifting on this book. I'd hate to admit how many times I write panel descriptions like "RICK TALKS" only to have him turn it into some kind of masterpiece. Charlie is the best.

But he does demand decompressed storylines... that's all him. So... who's your favorite now?

Hey Kirkman,

I like the additional development Eugene has been getting lately. Something about his character really interests me, but its difficult to pin down exactly what it is. Anyways, I have a quick question regarding our buddy Eugene.

Back in Issue #102, Eugene claims that he wants it to be "[his] bullets that are killing the monsters who killed Abraham and Glenn." He also says that he wants to do his part in the "coming slaughter." Sounds pretty bloodthirsty to me. So my question is, how come in Issue #110, he feels uneasy about producing bullets to kill The Savivors? He says that he hasn't considered that his actions would lead to people dying. Yet he did exactly that 8 issues earlier.

I hope you still print this letter even though I may have pointed out a hole in Eugene's character development. But rather, I hope you have some sort of explanation for this and can make sense of it for me.

Thanks for reading,

Jake Trusheim

One possible explanation...in #102, Rick replies that while he admires Eugene's sentiment, "THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE DOING." In between issues, Eugene comes to grips with getting revenge. He realizes he's not that bloodthirsty and commits to making bullets for all the reasons he states in #110. Then when Rick reveals his true intentions, Eugene's just not as down with it as he once was. And this next guy's got some strong feeling about Eugene as well...

Messrs. Kirkman and Mackiewicz,

First of all, I'd like to call bullshit on this bullet-making operation of Eugene's. He's only alive because he lied about having some special government knowledge or whatever, and now he's just trying to convince everyone he's a contributing member of the group by making up some nonsense about making bullets. OR, he is making bullets, but not for Rick's survivors. Either way, it's BULLSHIT and I'm calling it right now.

Or maybe it's not and this is just more evidence of how reading your book has affected my perspective on humanity.

Also, I loved getting to know some more about Ezekiel in this issue. You spent the last year or two killing/maiming my favorite characters, but now I find myself positively tickled by the book that usually has a way of making me want to puke my guts out. And while wanting to want to puke my guts out is one of the main reasons I read this book, it's a nice change of pace and I can't wait to see what else we learn about him. Keep introducing colorful characters with rich back-stories (and maybe some exotic animals) and you won't need to start writing any alien story lines until at least #300. As always, a job well done, sir.

On a serious note, Michonne probably needs to deal with some of her attachment issues.

Ok, Mr. Kirkman, I should stop thinking about zombies and go to bed.

Drew
Philadelphia

Eugene is a very complex and conflicted character... we'll be learning a lot more about him very soon. Stay tuned!

See some of you next week in San Diego. See the rest of you next month when you find out what the fucking fuck Negan's going to do to Rick.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Holy crap, this issue comes out the week before Comic-Con?! I can't believe it's that time of year already. Come by and say hello, please!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Okay, if you're not up on all the Walking Dead news that's spun out of this summer, let's recap: **ALL OUT WAR** starts in #115. It will run 12 issues. Those 12 issues will come out from October to April. That's one year of TWD mainlined in 7 months. The terrific Stefano Gaudiano will be coming onboard to ink Charlie, and the wonderful Dave Stewart will be coloring covers (as well as recoloring **WALKING DEAD #1** for its 10th Anniversary in October!!!). That it?

I'm sure there's MORE... so make sure to check thewalkingdead.com for all the news as it breaks.

Letter Hacks,

I think Negan was a police officer before the zombies. The "Anti-Rick" if you will.

John Turner
Liverpool

Nah.

OK, I know Negan killed Glenn, and that sucked. He's also a bully and a douche, and I look forward to seeing a zombie eat his head like a Pop-Tart. But the way he did Spencer was just great. So much to love in such a short time:

Brutally murders a scheming little turd
Makes a fantastic joke about locating the dead man's guts
Gets someone to clean up the mess so kids don't have to see it
Is immediately more concerned with playing pool than the horrific homicide he just committed

I want to see him pay for killing Glenn, and I hope his end is unpleasant. But he is also now my favorite comic book villain of all time.

Matt Drake

We've been getting more and more letters like this and...yeesh. This man rubs his dick on a baseball bat. You're going to ride hard for a dude like that?

He's a complicated but entertaining man. So what if he LOVES his baseball bat...

Yeah yeah yeah. You so FUNNY. Pulling that stunt. yep. Well. I must say. You've probably heard a quote on quote "sh*t talking 12 year old", or a "failed grammar teacher". Heh. You so funny Sean. WELL I DONT ACCEPT THAT.

#BringSinaBack. #GetRidofSean #HashTag TWITTER.

You do nothing but insult peoples Sean. Go die. Get a real guy in here. (Forget the feminine name)

He can draw. he understands comic books. You insult people. I'm starting a FB page. Bring Sina back, go die Sean. Yep. It gonna work.

CHOOM!
-Jaylan Schmidt
12 year-old in the NC
P.S. Jerk.

That FB page up yet? CHOOM us a link!

I'll subscribe to that... or whatever it is the kids do with Facebook. Is Sean really that harsh? I haven't noticed... what the heck?

Hey folks,

Now I doubt that Paul is related to Douglas, Regina and Spencer, but I was just wondering why you chose to give Paul the same last name? Did you just not notice that you had already given 3 characters that last name, making it an accident, or was it more a case of "Well I've met other people with my last name that I'm not related to, let's throw that in TWD just for shits and giggles."?

Or am I wrong altogether and Paul actually is a relative?

Thanks for giving me something to look forward to each month! Almost each week now between, TWD, Invincible and Invincible Universe!

Owen

Paul Monroe, AKA Jesus, is in no way related to the Monroe's of the community. The surname "Monroe" is actually the most popular last name in the Washington, DC and the surrounding counties. It may sound hard to believe, but FOUR PERCENT of the population there has that last name, which may not sound like a lot, but it really is. Giving Jesus that last name was really just my attempt at being accurate to the region.

Kirkman.

WHYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY?!!!!!!!!!!!! why kill spencer?! he was the one everyone loved to hate. the roamers and lurkers forum has a entire thread dedicated to him.

We know! It's awesome. The Spencer meme will live on.

I hope...

why would you kill him?! you didnt have to! you could have had him be that one douchey character that there is in most horror films who survives until right up to the end, but no! you had to go and gut him like a fish!!!!

who will forum users like myself talk about now?!

i miss him already!

single solitary tear rolls down cheek

i am going to light a candle for him tonight.

SPENCER! you may be gone, but the memory of your crappiness will live on forever on the internet!

josh hammond.

Everything lives on forever on the Internet.

Mr. Kirkman, sir--

I just read the letter from Jordan Peel asking about fat zombies--and I appreciate your reply, because I was going to answer a casting call for zombies back in the dawn of the TV show, but they specified really skinny people, and being a "woman of substance" myself, I was quite put off at first.

But your explanation makes very good sense, so thank you for that.

My question is this: Since we are, what, at least 2 or 3 years into the zombie apocalypse in the comic, how are there still fat people? I know Olivia tends to the groceries, but there can't be that many Hershey bars for her to maintain her Rubenesque features. Same for Eugene, who probably spent most of the time before we even met him walking and not eating at the Golden Corral buffet every other night. So how in the heck is anyone still overweight? Thanks for humoring me yet again, and please keep the comics coming!

W. K. "Walker Bait"

P.S. Thank you for killing off Spencer. He was a total tool.

While food is at times scarce, that is not the normal state of things in the community... also, not as much time is passing as it seems sometimes. Less than three years have passed in the book, and it's possible that Olivia was way fatter than when we first met her. She hasn't even really been around a year in the book's timeline.

Robert,

Page 8: An actual zombie/ roamer/ biter sighting! In fact there were about 7 of them, the biters that is. But, there's a problem! A...a biter...with Glasses?!? Not buying it; they would've probably fallen off while the girl was getting bitten. Zombie's wearing glasses--sheesh!

Zombies need good vision, too! Don't discriminate.

Don't other members of the cast feel a little skittish calling Jesus by his nickname? Think about it. Better yet, imagine if Jesus were introduced on the tv show! Cause, fyi, there are really no Jesus' in the world today--only the latino name 'hey-zoose'. I missed the tiger this issue, although he was at least Mentioned. Was Spencer the guy who beat up his kid and wife? I find it hard to keep up with all these characters, even after nearly 100 issues read. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be much chance of a 'spotlight' issue in the near future.

Don't start using ignorance as a weapon. That guy's name was Pete (ok...I had to look that up) and Rick shot him dead about halfway through Compendium 2.

Yeah... come on, Shaw! Pay attention.

But this book cannot continue to go on forever following along familiar lines, can it? Prison/ Governor...Hilltop/Negan... Eventually we gotta go somewhere, somewhere Completely New, right? Like, I dunno, finding out for real where the Roamer virus came from, repopulating the world...something. Otherwise it's the long good-bye, visa vie cancellation--and that might affect the Walking Dead tv show! Which...I really don't watch anymore. Sorry. I miss Abraham, too.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

Don't worry about the book, Shaw. I've got plans. Also... the community, Hilltop, Kingdom and Negan is an evolution... a continuation if you will, of the story that started with the prison and the Governor. They are similar only in that this is how the world is evolving... and really, we're just getting started.

HI ROBERT I LOVE YOU BUT I WOULD LOVE YOU SO MUCH MORE IF YOU TOLD ME YOU'RE A FEMINIST ONLY IF YOU ACTUALLY ARE THOUGH

ALSO I'LL INCLUDE MY POSTAL ADDRESS AND HOPE YOU SEND ME AT LEAST A POSTCARD. BE NICE TO A THIRD WORLD GIRL WHO WILL OWN ALL YOUR COMICS SOMEDAY

On a more serious note, I honestly think Carol is one of the greatest characters on television, her arc shows so beautifully how an abusive relationship changes so much of you, and all you can become once you're free of your tormentors. I really appreciate her story. Thank you.

I also love Andrea in the comics, she's such a badass. she's so independent. I love your comics for all their depth, in particular, the scene with the cannibals. That was brilliant.

Okay bye now
love ya

Fatin Nawaz

I'm probably too lazy to be a feminist and I've been accused of being the exact opposite online before. That said, I recognize the hardships women face even today and I'm always trying to be mindful of my natural biases as a terrible male. So yeah... I'm a feminist. Sure.

So are you gonna do anything with Sophia besides run around, giggle, and play with Jenga blocks for 100+ issues? I know she's a minor character, but have her cook dinner, jumping jacks, water polo, just anything!

Ceejay
Bellevue, NE

Hey! She's about to enter her rebellious phase, and that's where the boys come in...PLENTY of story material there.

I can't win...

Gentalmen.

I see in issue #109 when Jesus introduced Earl Sutton to Maggie, she introduced herself as Maggie Greene. Why didn't she take Glenn's last name when they were married by her father?

Keep up the great work.

Jedimarley

My wife didn't take my name either. Guess that makes me a feminist, too...meaning I let her do what she wants, even when it's the wrong thing.

Or it could be because Glenn doesn't have a last name...

Hey Kirkman,

I have tried to be nice and wrote some pleasant pleasant letters but you don't seem to respond unless someone is disrespectful to you. I see you have a little Negan in you.

Crap, is my Negan showing? Oops...

Let's get right down to it jump over all the B.S. why in the world are all the black men in this world only interested in white women? Michonne is a strong black woman and believe it or not most black men like that. Why does she have to settle for Morgan (a crazy black man) and Ezekiel (a clown). Can we develop some strong black men in the series that last longer then four issues. You're killing me. Its 2013, let's make it happen. I look forward to these suggestions of mines being integrated to the stories.

Yours truly,
A z
strong black man.

PS. I love the book.

Ezekiel may look like a clown, but I assure you he could very well be the smartest person in the book. Morgan was troubled, not crazy... mostly. But I hear you. It's hard to do minorities justice in this book because... horrible things happen to all the characters in this book. I'd argue that Rick is as damaged and crazy as Morgan ever was, if not more so. But I get what you're saying and I'll continue the effort to treat the minority characters with respect and not fall into any clichés. Thanks for reading.

Sean? Would you like to insult this guy before we move on?

With TWD amping up its production schedule? Enough dicking around.

Happy Free Fuck Day, everybody! Celebrate in peace and get real sweaty. Next issue...a declaration of war.

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you all next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

WAR! What is it good for? 12 issues on an accelerated schedule, that's what. #115 next month kicks off ALL OUT WAR. But first, letters to #112. And if folks got this amped by the lead-up... let's just see what you're all talking about six issues from now...

Let's keep this short and sweet! I've got to get back to writing issue 117!

Hey Guys,

Wow just wow, issue 112 was outstanding, when Rick pointed that gun, I was yelling THIS IS IT!!!! Then you effing pulled me back and I yelled NOOOOOO! So close, it just got me more hyped for ALL OUT WAR!

I can't believe its been a year since I started reading TWD (Not to mention 10 years for you guys wow) In fact the first issue I picked up new was 100 at last years SDCC (and I had to read it there, I couldn't wait). Let me tell you every issue has been loved, In fact comic book day is like xmas every month when TWD comes out, and for awhile I'll have xmas bi-fucking-weekly so THANKS you fucking fucked stupid fuckers, and I'm sure I'll see you at SDCC 2013!

Lots of un-weird love,
Clayton
Encinitas, CA

I stopped in Encinitas on my way down to SDCC and had some amazing Mexican food at Callejon. Shout out to the entire EnC!

I think it's important to clarify that we're going better than monthly, but because of a few factors, like the holidays, true bi-weekly isn't possible. So it goes like this.

115 - October
116, 117 - November
118 - December
119, 120 - January
121, 122 - February
123, 124 - March
125, 126 - April

Dear DM and Commie,

It's official. I'm totally rooting for Negan now. The only thing holding me back was his train threat on Carl and once he said that was empty I'm with him. (I couldn't get behind some nutfuck that would let a kid get raped, you follow me?)

And what is there to root for you may ask? I would respond what's not to root for? He's had the best lines in the book in recent memory. He curses really well. He named his bat. And speaking of Lucille, he needs to bash in Rick's brains with her and be done with him. He seems too fucking smart to let Rick live and it doesn't seem realistic if he doesn't off him. As you may or may not know, Rick can be trouble if left to his own devices.

I'm probably in the minority in my support for the guy,

but fuck it. Here's to you Negan! I'm raising a glass

(my Negan pint glass which I recently purchased at HeroesCon in Charlotte) in your honor!

Rob Shelor
The Fucking President of the Negan Fan Club *
Roanoke VA

(*I was going to call it the Fucking Negan Fan Club or maybe even the Negan Fucking Fan Club, but you can probably see why I didn't go with either one of those. I like the guy, but not that much.)

Given the choice to follow Negan or the Governor, I am following Negan. I'm sure I will regret saying that somewhere down the line.

shooting guns out of hands???? Give me a break
You have now jumped the shark.
Rick would be dead already after that
wd has entered lala land.

Vx777

Let's all retire the use of "jump the shark." Its time has come.

Seriously. I feel like I've been jumping the shark since issue 19. Zombie pets?! A katana sword! You're jumping the shark, Kirkman! Yeah, yeah, yeah... tell me more.

Kirkman you bastard. Teasing me with a panel spanning two whole fucking pages, intentionally misleading me and countless others. For a brief moment in issue #112, we believed (because YOU wanted us to) that Rick had finally avenged our dearly departed brother Glenn and shut Negan's foul fucking mouth once and for all. I had a boner longer than Eugene's mullet when Rick leveled his pistol and proceeded to let loose an action movie line that would make Steven Seagal blush. My arousal was short-lived though, instead of blowing his enemies brains out, Rick suffers yet another hand injury. Now he's a "fucking fucked fucker". Now I don't get to spend the rest of my summer watching Rick tend his garden or teach Carl algebra or bang Andrea or whatever the hell it is he would do if shit just calmed the fuck down for a once.

My boy Chach was once involved in a situation (which won't be recounted here) that lead to him saying, "You're fucked. You're fucking fucked"... and I've loved that phrase (and variations thereof) ever since.

Who the hell is Chach? Are we just mentioning random friends now?

You do your thing, I'll do mine.

Maybe if Andrea actually shot at the fucking villain instead of his driver- we'd get an issue where Michonne learns how to can pickles while Carl gets a haircut. I guess I'll have to settle for more action, more drama,

and even more suspense.

And you call yourself a writer.

Kenneth Sandlin, Huntsville Al

(PS- thanks for setting a story in the South that doesn't revolve around how southern the characters are)

No sweat. Being from the south, I too am not too fond of their frequent portrayal in all forms of media. Just doing my part.

Dear Kirkman and co.

I have been a long-time reader and now a fan of the show. (Darryl is just so...yummy!) But I have to agree with a previous letter- hack, it might be better for me to read six months worth at a time. I appreciate your hard work, brilliance, etc. but I'm sooo bored of Negan/ Governor/whatever. I am first and foremost a zombie fan but the comic is starting to feel more like a twisted Archie and Friends. (Obviously with a lot cooler artwork!)

Having been a Romero fan for the past thirty years, I have spent way too much time thinking and dreaming of survival in a post zombie apocalypse and that's what I've been looking for from you. Where are all the damn zombies!! I keep hanging on, like some bad relationship but I'm afraid we're going to have to break up, or at least 'take a break'.

Guess I'll go watch the original Dawn of The Dead again...

Jennie the Zombie lover

With the All Out War schedule, we'll be releasing THREE trades next year, so your plans to downgrade this relationship sadly won't go as planned. It's more a long distance thing now, and we'll pop into town unexpectedly and take you out for some drinks and you'll think, "Yeah, that's why I liked these dudes in the first place." Because no matter where you go, like Richard Marx, we'll still be right here waiting for you.

Also, there are still zombies in this comic... they're just not the focus right now. But they'll be back... YOU'LL see.

Thanks for signing up for Tiger Facts! You now will receive fun daily facts about TIGERS!

Did you know a group of tigers is known as an 'ambush' or 'streak'?

<To cancel Daily Tiger Facts, reply 'cancel'>

More than one tiger is also known as "too fucking many."

I misread that as "steak" instead of "streak." "And then our car rounded the corner to see that we'd driven right into a steak of tigers. I barely made it out alive." It made me chuckle.

This guy ALWAYS misreads emails. AND has food on the brain. So thanks for the double whammy, Tiger Facts.

I think Heath is the most qualified replacement for Glenn (RIP). While he can never be replaced, Heath embodies a lot of his redeeming qualities and they were like best friends, and I think it's only right. I hope he plays a bigger role in the future, unless you kill him off too. I know the only-one-black-guy-at-a-time quota needs to be filled. I just tried guilt-tripping you into keeping him alive, and alas he still is!

Ceejay P
Bellevue, NE

I'm down with this idea. Make it happen, boss.

There has always been more than one black character in this comic!

Robert and Co.

I'm a big fan. I love the Walking Dead so much but I do want to address what I think is the largest problem with the series right now. I'm not writing to talk about the tiger, or the guns being shot out of people's hands, etc. I want to talk about the character, or lack thereof. The characters used to be so incredible at the prison. We knew everyone there and it was a punch to the gut when each of them died, not including Patricia. We don't even know everyone at Alexandria. The only new characters that are still alive that I care about are Jesus and Eugene. I think other characters like Heath, Aaron, Eric, Rosita, Olivia, Gabriel, Holly, Nicholas, and even Sophia need to spend more time in the spotlight because if you're planning another massacre for All Out War, I won't care if any of these new ones die. A conversation here and there isn't going to cut it.

Sam

With a cast this large—and growing—we're always going to run into this issue. I think we do a good job giving a lot of the characters you've mentioned moments when they do appear, but they've got reoccurring roles opposite the main cast. Unless they get a call-up...and at least one of those characters is featured pretty heavily on upcoming covers...

I hear you, Sam. It's mostly a matter of room, but it's probably something I could have put a little more focus on these past two years or so. I feel it will be corrected somewhat in coming issues, stay tuned.

Robert and the Skybound team!

I have finally caught up to the most recent issue of TWD and Invincible! I didn't think the day would ever come! I don't know which one I like more! Either way, I am more than excited to meet you all at my first SD Comic-Con this year (always wanted to go, never had the means). I can't wait to hear it all.

Anyway I just wanted to say that 112 was a great issue. I was on pins and needles during the masterful 2 page spread of Rick. Charlie Adlard is brilliant beyond compare. Also, can I say that Negan is the most charismatic, horrifying, and badass villain in the TWD universe. You guys have really outdone yourselves! Please tell me there is a Negan Special coming soon!

Thank you guys for all the worlds you create and a VERY Happy 10th Birthday! We're going to war! I haven't been this excited for a story arc since the Viltrumite War! (That's two for "Invincible" name droppage, sorry).

Hope to see you in San Diego!
Romel De Silva

Met a lot of great folks at SDCC this year, hope you were one of them!

Invincible name droppage is always welcome here at Letter Hacks.

Ok. Next month is the BIG one. To celebrate this title's 10th Anniversary, we have #115, THE WALKING DEAD #1 10th Anniversary Edition, which presents the first issue recolored by Dave Stewart, and also THE ART OF CHARLIE ADLARD, a very cool art book chock full of zombies and all the other amazing things Charlie draws. PLUS (running out of breath here) Robert and Charlie will be in attendance at New York Comic Con, where Skybound will be celebrating all things Walking Dead and offering lots of cool stuff. Like free high fives.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Woo Hoo!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

ALL OUT WAR...it's here. The armies have marched. The sides are drawn. Next month, the bullets fly.

For all of you going to NYCC this weekend (10/10-13), both Robert and Charlie will be there signing every day, and the Skybound booth will be slinging all sorts of exclusive Walking Dead merch, so please stop on by. My favorites: the Faction logo t-shirts and messenger bags. Claim your allegiance at the start of AOW, and pray you chose the right side.

My favorite is the Walking Dead bubble gum and the water guns... boy that Kirkman is a sell out.

Speaking of selling out... did you guys hear the news of the SECOND WALKING DEAD TV SHOW?! Holy smokes, that's pretty crazy, right? I know the the initial reaction to that can always be "whoa, too much of a good thing... greedy much?" But honestly, I want to reassure people that I'm doing everything in my power to ensure that the Walking Dead companion show has as much (if not more) punch as the parent show, and the idea of telling stories set in this universe on television without having the comic as a road map is REALLY exciting to me. As exciting as when I first started writing this book. The most important thing is that the parent show, featuring Rick and all the rest, is going to be completely unchanged by this extra show. And of course, this comic will continue, unchanged, which remains of utmost importance to me.

So I'm confident it's not too much... but we won't know until 2015, so... fingers crossed!

Let's answer some mail! NO WAIT!! THERE'S MORE TO DISCUSS!!

Holy crap we welcome two new artists into the Walking Dead fold with this issue! Taking over on coloring the covers is comics' own DAVE STEWART! You may know him from Hellboy or a million other fine books. He's great! Also, a big round of applause for inker STEFANO GAUDIANO who will be helping Charlie out on art for the duration of this 12 issue storyline. I think you'll agree both of these fine gentlemen have done a bang up job with their respective duties.

Now onto letters!

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

Just finished issue 113. It was great. One thing though, when Negan compares Carl to Humpty Dumpty, he talks about the difficulties of horses putting eggs back together. To that I say: where in the nursery rhyme does it explicitly say that Mr. Dumpty is an egg? Go ahead, say the rhyme out loud.

Keep up the good work!

Jordan Bourne
Vancouver, BC

I don't know how they do things in Vancouver, Jordan... but as a child, I think I first encountered the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme in Richard Scarry's nursery rhyme books... and he's

portrayed as an egg there... and he's also an egg in Shrek, right? So I don't know where that came from... but to me, Humpty Dumpty has always been an egg. I guess Negan read the same books as a kid that I did... weird.

Dear Kirk,

2 months ago, I decided to give these comics a chance because I was such a big fan of the show. Now the show doesn't come close to doing these comics justice! My jaw has dropped numerous times throughout the series. Can't wait for the all out war! I have some thoughts to throw out and let dry, so here we go.

1. I am a huge fan of killing off characters. The way you get everyone attached to these characters just to watch them leave, is pure genius. It makes this series what it is. So keep breaking our hearts, please.

2. DONT EVER PRINT IN COLOR. The covers are masterpieces, but for the actual strips, leave them as is. I know you are standing your ground for black and white, so I'm just saying good choice.

Much love for the series,

Ethan Sather

Expect to get your heart broken, and expect to see THE WALKING DEAD #1 10th Anniversary Edition in stores right now, with coloring by Dave Stewart. It looks really sharp, and also has a great article where Robert and Image publisher Eric Stephenson talk extensively about the past 10 years of TWD and drop some knowledge that you don't already know, you bunch of know-it-alls.

Yeah, it's a fun little project... but don't worry, it'll probably be the 20th anniversary before we do issue 2 in color!! Probably...

I've been reading Walking Dead since issue #1. I first picked it up because I didn't believe a comic about zombies would be that interesting. I was wrong. It was unbelievably interesting and I was hooked. Now it's issue #113 and I don't know what the hell I'm reading any more. I feel like this title lost its humanity a long time ago. Now I'm reading it out of habit and there's a sigh before I open up every issue as I prepare to read, not a title about survival, but instead it seems to be about whatever new torture you can think to put the characters through. This title feels like it's just a character meat grinder now and it's lost (for me at least) any spark of hope that made past story lines so intense and enjoyable. I want to thank you for so many years of entertainment, but I can no longer go with you on this journey. I just don't see what the point is anymore, but I really did have a great time while it lasted.

Thanks,
Walter

I think large part of this storyline is precisely about hope. Rick and his team have accepted that this war may be their only shot at building a better world. But is it really possible? I hope you stick

around to find out, but no hard feelings if you don't. A great time is all you can ask for.

No worries, Walter. If it's not your cup of tea, I understand. I would ask that you, at some point in the future, maybe read a collection or two in a nice comfy chair at Barnes and Noble while your wife shops at the mall or something. You may enjoy them and come back... or not.

Guys,

I had a couple thoughts for you. The first is about cars; it annoys me when a character panics when they see one or more of the undead and plow into them at 60 mph, then end up limping away with a trail of Zombies after them. I see them do this in this comic (and others), the TV series, and every Zombie movie since the 80's. I wish somebody would learn to put the car in low gear and cruse through at 15-20mph---they'll bounce off no problem. If one does fall in front of you, well we've all seen "Toxic Avenger".

The second is a siege idea should you guys be open to it. Negan's place is well fortified, except for one oversight on his part---ample use of natural light, (large windows--lots of them). OK first they'll need to construct a catapult that will fit in the bed of a truck (surely some of the survivors were Boy Scouts). Next they'll need some PVC buckets (they'll break on impact--they'll want this), and some Styrofoam coolers (doesn't matter if they're broke or whole). Break apart the cooler into those little balls, put in bucket. Now, take some gas and dissolve the Styrofoam into a gooey jell, stock a rag or towel in it. Use the catapult to punch these babies in to Negan's sanctuary (remember to light the towel). "I love the smell of napalm in the morning. . . that gasoline smell, it reminds me of..Victory."

Do the Boy Scouts really teach all this?! I'd suggest they advertise better.

Can we get into legal trouble for printing this letter? Uh... don't try this at home, kids.

Last, I'd hate to see Negan get killed. Not when Rick has a surgeon who can safely amputate both his arms and his legs (feed them to the tiger). Then Negan would have to be taken care of by people who hate him. That is till he talks Carl into killing him.

You're full of ideas!

I hope you guys find this interesting. And by the way, I would like to thank you... Years ago you were at Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC; my son and I were getting some Marvel Zombies stuff signed. You and he talked for a little bit, and you gave him the first 2 of those 6 issue volumes of the Walking Dead... It made a big impression on him. I found that very cool.

Thank you,
Charles Wolfe

I love giving away free comics! Good to hear this one worked out. Tell your son I said hello!

Kirkman (or whoever posted this: I am always unclear as to who is speaking in the different comment fonts),

I get bold, Robert gets italics.

I'm also GRAY or something... right? I thought it was pretty clear!

In WD #105 "Letter Hacks" you mentioned your beliefs regarding what would happen if society fell apart, and the difficulties you find with this thought: particularly that it seems to imply that humans are "inherently bad" and that civilization is thus needed to keep them at bay (did I capture that correctly?)

Look, we should NOT be held accountable for things we've said in past Letter Hacks. It's unfair. However, you left off the point where Robert says, "I don't think I really believe this, I think it's more that I believe this is POSSIBLY true."

I'm writing to say, that you don't have to worry about how to balance this belief as precariously as you may think. Humanity doesn't need to be inherently bad nor inherently evil; humanity simply needs to

be inherently animal.

It then follows that civilization need not be something to keep back the tides of humanity, but rather something that recognizes the inherent animal nature of our species and works with it; something which we've designed, through a highlight of our species particular strengths, in an attempt to overcome our particular weaknesses.

Anyway, I find peace in that.

Regards,
Jim Nave
Portland, OR

That works, too.

Robert "The Devil" Kirkman and Sean (I still miss Sina though),

Would you, if you had to see him as much as we still do?

No kidding... SHEESH.

I'm here to complain about (no, not tigers) everyone in this book gets laid. EVERYONE but Carl. I know, he's 9-10 years old but HEY! It's the apocalypse! Things change. Maybe a time skip after All Out War... C'mon, boy got shot twice, lost his eye, mom and half-sister, he needs some fun!

Lucas Carvalho
Rio de Janeiro

I'm not comfortable talking about pre-pubescent sexuality here. This is America after all. We've only recently publicly acknowledged the existence of bubble butts, a great decades old Brazilian institution.

I'm not touching this one.

Now THAT'S more like it.

It's been a while since I've gotten the old fight or flight feeling from reading TWD. Did I ever explain that to you guys before? You see, the thing about TWD that makes it so great is that unlike ANY other material I've ever come across, it puts me into its world. I experience the same anxiety as the characters in the book when I read TWD. My body literally trembles as my adrenaline flows in preparation for me to either kick some ass or haul ass. (I gave the books to a good friend of mine and he experienced the same thing btw). Reading issue 113 gave me that feeling back. Awesome! Okay I've come to realize you don't like to print positive letters so how about this for a criticism. I think it's shitty that you don't print more positive letters. When something is this good, we (the fans) should get the chance to express our appreciation. So you suck for not letting us tell you, you're great.

How's that?

Frantz Kenol

Positive AND negative. I'm confused on whether that means we still suck...

It's all about making an interesting letters column. You can only say "thanks for the kind words" so many different ways.

Underrated ALL OUT WAR fact: we get to do more Hacks as well! So keep sending in those letters, and we'll keep giving you shit to talk about--and probably reasons to talk that shit.

And hey, while you're here, check out the preview of Skybound's newest title, Manifest Destiny!

-Sean Mackiewicz

WOO HOO!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Right now me and some of the Skybound crew are flying over the Rocky Mountains on our way to NYCC.... And even at 35,000 feet, I can bask in your #114 grievances. Get ready for an ol' fashioned hate bag...

I didn't get around to adding my contributions to this until after New York Comic-Con... so I'm doing this the day this book goes to print! It's like you're talking to the Robert of the future and I'm talking to the Sean of the past! Sweet!

Don't eat too much pizza in New York.

I hope you kids are enjoying ALL OUT WAR so far... this is the issue where things start going down... and I promise this is only the beginning... as Rick just said, on that page, right there on the left... cool. Anyway... mail--let's dive right in!

Hmm, so Negan's soldiers can shoot tiny guns out of people's hands from a very long distance like in issue 112, but they can't shoot Jesus, who is probably a 6 foot tall man and who is no more than 10 yards away. Weird...

Victor

Obviously the circumstances were different. When they shot the guns out of people's hands... they were in position, ready to do that. When Jesus attacked, they were out of their positions and not prepared to fire. They didn't stay in position after Negan had taken control of the situation... which in hindsight, was a mistake.

Thanks for playing, though.

Hey Gang,

While I'm looking forward to ALL OUT WAR and the resulting carnage and mayhem to come; the "Governor/ Negan/ Evil Despot story lines are getting a bit repetitive.

Sure, during a Zombie Apocalypse Warlords and Strong Men will surely arise. But so will Evil Cult Leaders, well meaning, but despotic former Government officials, military and police units will form small kingdoms. There are endless stories to be told within this genre, starring these wonderful characters you've created. But it's seemed like you have gotten stuck in a rut, and are repeating the same themes.

I love your comic, but the Negan Series has been a disappointment, outside of the development of Carl. He needs to start training with Michonne and really start to become a true bad ass.

Just to throw something back at you: if Gov/Negan is repetitive, do we really need another badass as well?

I have high hopes for ALL OUT WAR, outside of the typical killing of a major character (that's getting to be predictable now). I'm hoping you'll use this opportunity to expand not only the characters in the series, but the world in which they live. The readers know almost nothing about the rest of America or the world, your character live in.

Rob D.
San Antonio

I promise you won't be able to predict the events of All Out War... but check back in at the end and let us know. I've covered the Negan/Governor thing in the letters page before, so I'm not going to repeat myself.

Ok, I know this comic is about the human condition, zombies are only the backdrop blah blah, but it's been 2 and a half years real time, 32 issues and counting since the last walker fatality. I am no longer afraid for our survivors when they face the undead, and that is exactly what you want. I'm not asking for a huge herd. All I ask is one little fatal nibble to quench my bloodthirst. ONE!!! You OWE us that, we who fill your pockets with benjamins. Do it on someone useless like, I dunno, Gabriel or Rosita. God, you're stingier than a old fart with his retirement money! One bite.

Ceejay P
Bellevue, NE

Despite your attempts to bring the Shaw, you lack his certain je nais c'est quoi... check out how it's done...

Robert and crew,

Odd but interesting cliffhanger there, Kirkman. Wouldn't say that TWD #114 was anything really special, kind of sleep-walky really. It just seems, like Jennie the Zombie Lover pointed out this issue, that, well - Everyone's forgotten about the zombies!! How can Carl and Andrea and all those others being firing shots, outside and...no zombies? It's okay to Call them zombies, right...? Calling All Zombies!! I did like Ghosted #3 a lot more than this offering; just keeping it in the family.

Cheers,

Andrew J. Shaw

The zombies unleashed in this issue aren't going anywhere...

And there's plenty more where that came from.

Hey guys,

So this is probably the first time you have heard this (at least in a while) but father Gabriel stokes is my favorite character (that's alive) in TWD. I love this guy and think its bullshit that he doesn't get any time to shine! And now I'd say that's he #1, or very close to it, on the chopping block. Especially with all out war coming. I mean, when you do kill him at least let him go with some dignity or some heroism. I quite literally got out of my seat and started cheering when he got out of the church played his role in no way out. When/if Rick and co. leave ASZ please let Gabriel go with them! He deserves so much more time than he gets. I've honestly been expecting a plot twist where Gabriel actually died off panel in the church.

So let us pray for father Gabriel as Alexandria enters

these dark, dark times and may you give him the strength and bravery he will no doubt need to step outside of his cushy church and stand with Rick and fight, or bless him with the wisdom and confidence he may need to comfort those off the battlefield. Holy Mary, mother of god pray for him in this time of need,

AMEN

J

Maybe if you made a better case for him, I mean, you wrote over 200 words and I have no clue what you find so appealing. If anyone can make the case for Gabe so we're not entirely dependent on prayer to save his ass...do it now, or forever hold your peace.

Expect more Gabriel business very soon... unless he dies.

Dear The Best Fucking Comic Book Team,

First off THANK YOU! Over the past 2.5 to 3 years that I have been reading TWD I have kept falling more and more in love with the story and characters. Kirkman, you are the man! Please keep up the fantastic work.

This is my first time writing to the team and wanted to put my word in before this hugely anticipated war. I want to ask about Negan's response in issue 114. Negan running from the situation just does not fit his character. I could possibly see the Governor running but Negan is too egotistical for that. What was that all about?

Ryan Learas

Negan was smart enough to run. He knew that situation was out of control and there were too many unknown dangers.

Kirkman and Co.,

So I just got around to reading TWD 114 and INVINCIBLE 105 (in that order). A few observations follow, just in case you are interested. I hope you might indulge me as I haven't written in a while...

1) The cover makes me laugh a little inside every time I look at it... I know that Jesus is obviously a (metaphor?) badass (having read the issue) but that dude getting choked out looks like he is sticking his tongue out at us... as a joke. WTF?!? Is that SUPPOSED to be hilarious? Cuz it is. Very. Funny.

People rarely have time to look cool in fights.

2) Carl's haircut is pretty slick, it suits him. The Cowboy hat is totally his trademark by now but the John Connor look is DEFINITELY Cam Stylez approved for Carl... Easy Money... I'm still convinced that some shocking stuff/big changes are coming for Carl in particular (and being that I hate accidental spoilers I'm stopping this thought now).

Letters Hacks is 100% future spoiler-free. Anything in the past 115 issues is fair game. Though "Whatever happened to Buttons the horse?" in TWD should've become the new "Whatever happened to the Russian?" in Sopranos by now. I'm not mad... just disappointed...

3) I'm really not sure why folks are flipping out on the whole "shooting the gun from the hand" thing... I thought it was awesome! Clever comic writing, FTW... Oh, and "Jumping The Shark" is here to stay, it is just getting started, in fact.

No, it's been here for far too long and is hereby banned from these pages.

I feel like I'm not doing my job if someone doesn't write in saying an issue "jumped the shark and ruined the series" each month.

4) So we are about to go to War, eh? TWD twice a month? Doesn't this mean twice as many Letter Hacks? Can you swing THAT too on top of INVINCIBLE, Thief of Thieves AND an AMC spinoff? Do you sleep? Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?

Next month, I request that you guys write my responses to your letters. The best ones will run

COMPLETELY UNCREDITED. That sounds like fun, right? Unless you do a terrible job. PLEASE don't do a terrible job.

And then you'll write mine! Right, Sean?

That's about it for now... I'm looking forward to ALL OUT WAR, I just hope Zombie Conquest makes at LEAST a cameo... Halloween is approaching after all...

Seriously though, that cover... that dude in the glasses totally cover bombed us. I love it.

Catch ya on the Flip Side.

Cam Stylez

The guy with the glasses is awesome!

First, I'm absolutely in love with TWD. It started with the show but after reading the two Compendiums in a matter of days, I became a huge fan of the comics also. I love how they cross over but are separate stories. You guys come up with amazing characters, my current favorite is Jesus and I will be really freakin' sad if he dies. But anyway, thanks so much for including the issue release months! I get to enjoy the rest of my pregnancy knowing I won't miss any of the war and have my little ass kicker just in time for it to be over! That's what I call healthy pregnancy reading!

KaCee H.

Proof positive that pregnancies CAN result in reasoning and an even temper... good luck and thanks for reading!

Yo, Kirkman and co.

I've always been intrigued by the fact that there are people in Alexandria we still don't know. There was that one lady at the "welcoming party" who wanted to hook up Michonne, who we haven't seen since. There has been a few men and women we see off and on... among them is a man who's most defining feature is his mohawk.

Now, who is this random mohawk guy? I declare a thorough explanation. His first appearance is in "Life Among Them" on page 58. He's saving Rick and the others on the pickup truck with those other miscellaneous guys who are dead. His most recent appearance is quite recently in "Something To Fear" page 127. Wow, I love this guy. The sheer complexity of his character is simply astounding. I declare we form a cult. A cult for the random mohawk guy. He shall be the king of TWD. He probably killed the Governor, disguised as a Woodbury citizen, yet to reveal his holiness to Rick. He's probably the second incarnation of Jesus. Yeah. He should probably kill Negan too. Seems about right.

Blake

The DC area's got a proud hardcore/punk tradition, so one dude with a mohawk is totally no surprise. How he gets to listen to Fugazi now is a story for another day...

We'll totally see more of all these people... don't worry.

Next issue with the first battle over... we'll see more zombies. Happy?

And hey, check out the preview of BLACK SCIENCE #1 by Rick Remender and Matteo Scalera (our friend and artist of the upcoming Skybound mini, DEAD BODY ROAD). How does one amazing artist put out two books a month?! How does he do it?!

-Sean Mackiewicz

I certainly have no idea! But I'm glad he does it! Be on the look out for more awesome stuff coming up in issue 117 which will be in stores very soon! Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go finish the script for issue 120! We're so far ahead of schedule it's CRAZY!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Can you imagine the Governor ever doing something like THAT? Me either, haters. Me either.

I'm so far ahead on writing this book at this point I had to stop to remind myself exactly how this issue ended. Charlie and I are already working on 121... and by the time you're reading this... we'll probably be on 122. CRAZY!

Let's get into some letters.

Bobby Kirkman,

Yo dawg, what it do? I have meant to write several times to complain about the decrease in paper quality for the covers of both The Walking Dead and Invincible for a while now, but never really got around to it. Short end of that, if you need to charge more money per issue, that's fine. I just don't want the ink to run off in my hands.

That's not why I'm writing now, though! I'm writing now to ask that you cease these character special issues you've been publishing. The Governor special had very little original material, and now I've picked up the Tyreese special with similar results. I realize it's my own choice to purchase these, but I don't like having to tell my comic guy "yeah, I didn't really want this... thing. You shouldn't have pulled it for me." It's not that I don't enjoy the couple of pages of original material, but you could just put those at the end of monthly issues. The variants (that I inexplicably NEED to collect) are enough of a drain on my wallet. Come on, man. Eh? Ehhhh..?

Those specials are timed for new seasons of The Walking Dead show, geared more towards fans new to the comic, looking for more insight on who the new characters on the show are. We're very clear about content when we solicit... and really, it's your choice to buy it, right?

Yeah.

YEAH!

That said, I don't want this letter to be all bitching. Invincible and The Walking Dead have been at the top of my list for years now, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. Especially lately, The Walking Dead has had me hooked like a mofo. You clearly know how to write compelling stories and are privileged enough to work with some incredibly skilled artists. Ottley and Adlard are both the bee's knees. There's not much you could do now to make me stop buying your comics. The Governor and Tyreese specials have both just kinda irked me.

If you wanna print this, that'd be fine, but I'd also understand why you would choose not to. I repeat that I am a huge fan-- not just of yours, but of what Image has become.

Your Friend in Time,
Preston S Davis

Friends appreciate honesty, so thanks, Preston!

Wait, does that mean you DID like the Michonne special? Or did you MISS it! All joking aside, I certainly don't expect long time readers to be buying these reprints. And they are FAR from a shady cash grab. They really are intended to be cheap entry points for fans of the TV show that are thinking of trying the comic but haven't committed to a \$15 dollar TPB.

I try to be as fair as possible, we even gave away the original stories for these specials on Free Comic Book Day this year... so you wouldn't have had to buy any of them if you'd gotten that free comic.

But seriously, just don't buy it if you don't want it.

"Humpty Dumpty was a big fat egg. He was playing on the wall and he broke his leg."

Just this past week my daughter asked me if I realized that Humpty Dumpty wasn't an egg just as Jordan from Vancouver posed the same question in Issue #115. I did a little diggin' into the matter and it turns out one theory is the nursery rhyme was originally a riddle with the answer being an egg. My first response to my daughter was, "But that's not what the Beastie Boys said..."

Love the book, it's the reason I read comics,
Bob Wilkinson
West "by God" Virginia

Well, who are we to disagree with the Beasties?... Not Daniel Parsons, clearly...

Hey gang.

I love the book - it's one of the only things left on my pull list these days.

*That is very sad to hear, actually. Have you tried... *deep breath* Saga, East of West, Manhattan Projects, Velvet, Fatale, Lazarus, Sex Criminals, Satellite Sam, Pretty Deadly, Chew, Three, Sex, Prophet, The Great Pacific, Invincible, Thief of Thieves, Clone, Ghosted, or Nowhere Men? I mean... it seems like there's gotta be a book in there you'll love! Try more comics! There are even a few good ones out there that aren't published by Image.*

I saw the first letter in issue 115 and am writing to you with a break from zombie praise.

Humpty Dumpty, in the original meaning of the name, was used to describe an overweight gentleman in 16th century France. The original nursery rhyme was in reference to a cannon that sat guard on a wall - the cannon was refereed to as Humpty Dumpty because of its size and mass.

Lewis Carroll was the first to decide that the Humpty Dumpty character was an egg - he wrote this into 'Through the Looking Glass'.

Thank you!
Daniel Parsons

Whoever said you can't learn anything from the Walking Dead is full of shit.

Who said that?! WHO!!!

Hi!

I was just wondering if it's too soon to start petitioning for Kane Hodder to be cast as Abraham in the show. If it is, let me know when I should start. If it's not too soon, seriously, MAKE THIS HAPPEN! He was made for this role! You don't even have to give me credit for it. Just do it!

Thanks
Joe

Sorry, Joe. WAAAAY too late for casting suggestions that we don't take seriously anyway. But the good news is that Michael Cudlitz (Band of Brothers, Southland) was cast instead and well, he looks pretty damn cool.

Cudlitz is awesome. You're all going to love him. TRUST ME!

Holy crap!
Just finished reading #115 and I love the tension. This is going

to get real ugly real fast. I can't wait to see where this goes. I also love the guy at the bullet press wearing shorts and flip flops. Cause man I love wearing shorts. Pants suck. Everybody in the book wears pants. Need some shorts.

Charles

Would you believe I'm offering a two-fer on pants related Hacks? You'd take that deal every fucking day of the week, amiright?

This is my first time writing and I would have never thought of it before, but seriously I think I just figured out the biggest plot hole in your entire series! In fact, the biggest plot hole in any undead universe!

Why are they still wearing pant? Like seriously it's been shown in almost every series I have seen that as the walkers start to decay, they lose weight and become a lot skinnier. This means that at least some would indeed be pantless.

Just pointing out the inaccuracies,

Josh
Edmonton, Ab CANADA

Well... uh... moving on.

Dear Robert and thankfully not Sina (thought that would get your attention)

I'll start by saying Im loving the series and stoked about all out war finally being here but I want to get printed so its time for criticism.

What have we done?!

How many love stories do you need? its like "awesome I get to read about zombies and the breaking point of man in extreme situations and... nope I get to find out if a guy who talks medieval will hook up with Michonne or not"

and on that note how does Michonne even want love? don't get me wrong if she wants to get laid she damn well can she is a bad ass. Maybe too bad ass for love? plus it feels totally awkward to tell people Michonne is my imaginary world girlfriend if she keeps hooking up with people. Way to make it weird.

It'd be way worse if it were your real world girlfriend doing the same thing. Retreat into your imaginary bubble and be safe.

Yeah... in your imagination, Michonne can be single!

well before I keep trying to think I'm funny I will finish by saying life is a little better knowing I get a new TWD every two weeks. Congratulation on ten years!!

Brad G
BFC Emporium, Edmonton

It's not quite every two weeks... but we will be coming out quite rapidly, don't you worry! And thanks... I'm focused on hitting year 20 now!

Dear Walking Dead Staff,

Thank you very much for the creation of this comic, and congrats on a strong start for a 4th season. I am writing to let you know that I was blown away by the incredible inking of Stefano Gaudiano. Him and Mr. Adlard are doing an incredible job with the art, and I figured I should send this letter in support of it.

Huh... what? The art? You're sending a letter in about the art? Okay... fine. Whatever.

My question is regarding the art: When letting Mr. Adlard and now Mr. Gaudiano about new characters being introduced in the series, how much creative freedom are they given in designing them? Do you write a description and they okay the design with you? Is the process even that rigid?

It's pretty much that. Sometimes I send photos of real people to use as a reference point, sometimes I just mention real people to use as a reference point. Other times I just give a name and ethnicity and let Charlie handle the rest. It varies based on how important I deem the character initially.

I ask this because I am an illustration major in art school who has a nerdy curiosity about artistic processes.

Thanks again!
John D.

I don't care why, John. Isn't it enough to just have the question answered?!

Kirkman and Co.,

I guess you folks are living it up at NYCC as I write this. I have been enjoying this series for years and have never seen you folks at a Con. For Shame.

That will change soon, count on it.

Anyways, I loved the opening shot for All Out War. The pace was awesome and the art was outstanding. Oy, Stefano! Well done, the Inks were sick here. Love it.

I have to admit, I haven't felt incredibly engaged by this book ever since this Hilltop business began. As I said, I have read this book for a while and (like a few others, I'm sure) I started to see a lot of echoes in this book when Negan was introduced. This wasn't necessarily a bad thing (I love Negan now in fact) but I couldn't help wondering if you MEANT the book and the show to parallel each other the way they did this past year. The Governor and Negan are very different of course but let's be honest... it wasn't exactly BLAZING a new trail. The Hunters storyline? THAT was fucking cool stuff when you dropped it (original) and off the top of my head it was the last time this book REALLY blew me away.

I've stuck around (naturally) and have watched with great interest as The Walking Dead transformed from a cool comic my sister and I shared to the commercial JUGGERNAUT the Brand is now. Robert, I'm very happy for you, you do what you love and that is AWESOME...

I love these type of letters because I'm always waiting for The Turn... and highly anticipate what it will bring...

That being said the overwhelming success of The Walking Dead troubles me sometimes as I began to worry that the quality of the books would start to be affected as your focus began to shift. When Negan showed up in the book around the same time when the Gov showed up in the show I couldn't help but remember when Marvel put Peter "Back In Black" in the comics when Spiderman 3 came out (or when the Xmen went all Black Leather in the books RIGHT when Xmen came out). You mentioned sell out... I was starting to see it.

So now here we are on the Eve of the Dawn of Season 4 (spinoff soon to come) and TWD is going to step up the release schedule. I have had my doubts but to be honest issue 115 put a lot of them to rest. All Out War seems to be ready to shake things up (and what better time to do it than Halloween Season). Bring it. Enjoy the TV show, of course (I'm still in awe of how crazy fast things blew up with this book) but don't forget us faithful Letter Hacks. Keep the Black and Whites fresh, this is some of the best written work of all time considering the cultural impact thus far and y'all can go for miles more. So can we.

Happy Halloween y'all, Happy 10 Year Anniversary, here is to 30 more (and then some)

Cam Stylez

Well, I'm not going anywhere, and I promise, despite the show... I'm no less committed to this book. I did this book for many years while doing a lot of work at Marvel Comics that was very time consuming and this is really no different. Also, a lot of the things in the comic currently are things I had planned well before the show ever existed, so I promise I'd be doing this stuff if the show had never happened... it's just... less people would be reading it.

I'm happy the show happened, and I really do enjoy all the success The Walking Dead and all involved are experiencing but I do go to great efforts to not let it CHANGE this book. I think I've succeeded thus far and I hope to continue to do so.

I saw this headline today:

North Korea warns of 'all-out war' as it refuses to sign pact with US

Look at what you started, Kirkman.

Keenan Stacy
Rootstown, Ohio

Something tells me that North Korea would probably be the safest place to be during a zombie apocalypse. Or at least, that's what they'd lead us to believe...

Not touching this one.

Be back here in two weeks for Part 4 of All Out War...in which a familiar face joins the war effort.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, man... who could it be?! WHO?!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Ezekiel DOESN'T have a tiger. RIP Shiva.

Too soon, Sean. Too soon.

Robert,

Killing Lori and Judy scarred me mentally. Glenn being bludgeoned to death made my blood pressure drop down. The whole Michonne and Governor thing was simply fucked up. There are so many heartbreaking and shocking moments in this comic book that are impossible to count.

And at the end of the day, I'm okay with all that.

But, please, whatever you do, don't hurt the tiger.

Dodo Patak
Croatia

Dodo, get your "Ezekiel has a tiger" memorial t-shirt while supplies last. Don't think we'll be going back to print on those suckers.

We could always make them ironically.

Hello me and my husband are big fans. The comic is a must for us. But i have a few questions...

Kirkman, how does it make you feel to know no matter how dirty or detailed your comic may be it still doesn't compare to the awesome \$hit that Nicotero comes up with?

I'm sorry you seem funny. You make me laugh whenever i read "letter hacks" but dude you are such a dick. it's funny but so dick-ish. So thanks for the laughs and look forward to your dick-ish funny response.

Mackiewicz, you must be a parent. the lines i read from you in here remind me of how try to change topics with my step son.

Your fan,
Paige Yates

I would never talk down to a child the way I do to you guys!

I'm just going to assume you were calling Mackiewicz a dick... not me.

**That's totally something a dick would assume!
DIIIIIIICCCCKKKKK.**

It feels just fine to have Nicotero topping what we do here on the TV show. I'm very proud of what that team has been able to accomplish... that said, I will endeavor to work with Charlie to come up with something that could never be topped by the TV show. Gauntlet thrown!

Hi, a few questions.

I have to ask, when do ya think we'll get more information on the tv spin off?

Next year some time... mid year, I'd wager.

Also, could you tell is if Maggie is going to get more story apart from the baby. I'm honestly interested in her relationships with the group, mainly her and Rick. I'd love for you to delve into their relationship. And can you guys not kill her off anytime soon (TV SHOW AND COMICS, THANKS.) I'm interested in her story and still bitter over Andrea as I

was actually looking forward to Randrea? Rindrea?

You got some Maggie this issue and you've got some Maggie still to come. She's even on the cover to #124!

LOTS of cool stuff coming up for Maggie... unless she dies.

Final question is, do you think to some degree you have let fans or the actual TV show influence the writing of the comic/ TV series any?

Keep up the good work!
Greg

I've done everything I can to make sure that I don't let the existence of the TV show influence what I do in the comic. I don't want there to ever be a situation where you get a different story in the comic because of the show either because I don't know if it could eventually be adapted or because I got some kind of idea from the show.

I really do try to keep this comic as pure as possible.

Robert, Sean, & Co.

Now that we are in the middle of a war, when are you going to weaponize Rick's stub? Maybe add a machete blade, assault rifle, super-soaker? SOMETHING!

Evil Dead's Ash, Captain Hook, Merle Dixon... Rick Grimes?

One handed clap,
Romel De Silva

Weaponized Stub: one of the great, forgotten SoCal hardcore groups of the 80s... or basement VHS tape you can't unwatch?

Hey, just wanted to make sure... not EVERYONE who writes to you guys are dicks, right? 'Cause that seems like the case whenever I read Letter Hacks. If so, LOVE THE COMICS. ALL OF 'EM. YOU GUYS ARE GREAT. Hope that helps tip the scales.

Thanks for everything!
Doug

This Letter Hacks is so far dick-free...but also full of dicks, you follow me?

Most of the dicks are on Twitter.

Hey Guys,

I've been noticing that all the fan mail either fawns over how wonderful you guys are, or they go to the other extreme and let you know that you are destroying the series. I will do neither. I would just like you guys to know that I read your comics.

Trevor Johnson

This guy's not a dick!

I think this is the first "You guys aren't bad... but you're not exactly GOOD either" letter we've ever gotten.

This book has never looked better! Stefano Gaudiano, you're killin' it on inks! I'd like to see you stay on past the "All Out

War” event. Characters are popping of the page and there seems to be more depth with you on the team. Keep doing a beautiful job and thank you for all your hard work gentlemen,

Cameron B.
Olathe, Kansas

Yeah, everyone here couldn’t be happier with Stefano’s work. Go out and track down his other comics, like Gotham Central!

WE LOVE Stefano here at TWD central.

Hello there,

First time writer, I just want to say thank you for making my first comic book experience perfect with the walking dead series. I swear I’m on the edge of my seat right now waiting for #117. I’ve read through the series probably 3 times since I got them all a month ago.

Now my questions are how did Negan get a hold of Gregory? Did he go there and take him? And Jesus told Maggie and other on the hilltop to watch him what happened with that?

Thank you,

Owen Rowley
New Egypt, NJ

Sorry if it wasn’t clear... there’s a lot left to be assumed here. Gregory snuck out to warn Negan because he was so scared of the idea of going against him. He really is an awful human being.

First, let me tell you that the lilac-colored Walking Dead logo on the front of Issue #116 looked absolutely HIDEOUS! Good God!! Whose idea was that?! But more importantly, please don’t ever use that color again for the logo! Yuck! It didn’t even match the colors on the rest of the cover (the rest of which was great, especially the drawing of Holly who looked like she was about to put foot-to-ass. Or gun-to-ass since she was holding that shotgun). Perhaps the lilac color was some sick joke to intentionally piss people off. If so, then I guess the joke’s on me eh.

You don’t know what you’re talking about. That shit looks dope.

Agreed.

I really enjoy The Walking Dead, I haven’t read it since Issue #1 or anything but I am totally enamored by it and have read most issues through the first two compendiums. I prefer the comic over the TV show, but I have to say that Season 4 of the show is shaping up to be the best season so far in my opinion.

Agree. But watch out for the upcoming lilac episode.

I do a lot of thinking about “What if” scenarios when it comes to an apocalypse- zombie or otherwise- in which there is no electricity or other infrastructure so here are some pressing questions that I have been mulling over. Apologies if some of these have already been covered in other Letter Hacks in past issues...

#1- Water filtration plants/sewage treatment plants/clean drinking water: Assuming these types of facilities were all abandoned and no one is running them (and assuming that all bottled water has been scavenged and drunk up), how the hell does anyone have clean drinking water?

The safe zone was built to protect politicians in case of a serious emergency, so it’s got its own water supply.

#2- Related to this, do toilets still flush in an apocalypse? Not that I particularly want to, but I never see anyone use the can in any recent issues of the comics (and definitely not on the TV show).

Safe zone, yes. Everywhere else, I’d imagine it was like the time I was in Peru and just dumped a bucket of water down to aid in the non-functioning toilet. Humans have also proven to be effective in finding new places to take dumps.

#3- Menstrual cycles: yeah I know, gross topic but can’t help but think what do women do every month? Literally get “on the rag” like the days of old?

I don’t think anyone is requesting this subplot. Be thankful that all the female characters are polite enough to keep this business private, Jesus...

#4- Toothpaste: I never see anyone brush their teeth in the comic or TV show so I assume some people would have some painful cavities or other problems with their teeth from improper dental care.

Whatever real world aspects we touch are always in service to the story. But you can assume the safe zone has toothbrushes available.

#5- Glasses: My eyesight sucks without wearing glasses, so when I see Heath every month I can’t help but think if he lost his glasses he might as well not go outside the walls of the Safe Zone. I guess I just answered my own question with this one- if you depend on glasses to see you’d be in big trouble without them if you’re out “in the wild” amongst walkers. I have not seen anyone rig up their glasses with a fandangled tight sports strap-type of setup, though, to ensure that they don’t fall off.

Keep up the good work,

TONY
Chicago

Nice, Sean. Handle every other question so nicely and then just bail on me when the guy asks about eye glasses... damn you.

He already answered his own question--I’m trying to rate high in efficiency here.

Well, Tony... this may seem weird but in the world of the Walking Dead everyone’s glasses are magically stuck to their heads... there’s just no getting them off. They’re not like that weird Muppet where his eyes are on his glasses or anything, they just can’t take their glasses off.

Just got back from the comic book shop with my copy of issue 116. Not what I was expecting. In a good way, of course. I figured Rick wasn’t going to slink away after Negan’s “offer”, but I thought he was going to lose a lot more of his lil’ army from the Hilltop than he did. The zombie masses used as a weapon by the group they way they were was something that didn’t cross my mind either. Very nice.

Holly and Negan are going to make a cute couple. It’ll be fun to see how well they get along in the upcoming chapters. Also, Jesus stated that all he had was books back at the Hilltop. Not a vital question, but what do you think would be a few of the books in his collection? He seems like a fairly philosophical character who would value his reading material, just curious what he would spend his time on in the zombie apocalypse. Keep up the great work.

Darrick Patrick
Dayton, Ohio

Any books he’s still hanging onto after all this time must be important, right? But he probably didn’t take them from his house/apartment when shit went down, right? So they’d for the most part be popular, bestselling books... the Bible’s a no-brainer... Lord of the Rings... A People’s History of the United States... The Art of War? I thought this question would be kind of fun, now I’m just bored...

Actually, it’s mostly Goosebumps. Didn’t see that one coming did you?!

first off I just want to say I am a huge fan of both the TV series and comic book series of TWD and I have been collecting the single issue books for over a year now it’s definitely and always will be my favourite comic book series.

but I was wondering with this huge war going on what’s going to happen after? will the walkers ever be a threat to Rick and his friends again? I’m loving the current story arc but it seems like the walkers aren’t much of a threat whatsoever anymore.

Jonathan

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?! Maybe we should just break out our sweet crystal balls and tell you...

All kinds of awesome stuff. As cool as ALL OUR WAR is, I think Charlie would agree that what comes next... is going to be much cooler.

There’s no cease fire in sight, folks. Next issue, both sides regroup and casualties mount...

-Sean Mackiewicz

I can’t even remember what happens next because I’m already writing issue 122. Being this far ahead of schedule is WEIRD.

-Robert

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

While most of you were enjoying Thanksgiving dinner with your families, an inordinate number of lunatics were writing us letters. WALKING DEAD: We're more important than your families.

I'm thankful for letters... let's dive right in!

Dear Messrs Kirkman, Adlard, Gaudiano, Wooton, Rathburn, Stewart & Mackiewicz,

I enjoy your comic immensely. It is excellent, though each issue is way too short and one month between issues is too long to wait.... :-)

Cheers from Melbourne, Australia

Javier Legnoverde

One month?! If you're only buying one issue, what the hell have we been doing two for?! Get your shit together.

Yeah! We're putting out WAY too many issues of this comic WAY too frequently these days. People are really going to freak out when we eventually go back to monthly.

Hi guys,

Great comics, I'm a latecomer into the comic series but once I started I couldn't put it down.

I just had a question about Rick. Unless I missed it, no one knows the fate of the Governor. For all they know he won and is still alive.

So why would Rick be so brazen in dealing with Negan? Wouldn't he be hesitant to repeat the same mistakes?

Phillip,
Austin, TX

Michonne was still lurking around the prison in the aftermath of the attack, so I always figured she ID'd the Governor and passed that message along off-panel.

Two things... even if they did think the Governor was alive... he's all the way in Georgia, a few states away. So he's a non-issue. And yes, they do know he's dead and the prison fell. Aside from Michonne relaying that info, I think Rick and Carl saw the state of things and knew there really wasn't any "winner" that day. The other thing, Rick has learned a LOT since the prison, so if he seems confident in the face of Negan, that's why. We'll soon learn how wise that confidence ended up being...

Dear Mr. Kirkman

I've been with you since the very first issue and I wanted to write in to express my utter disgust with issue #116 of TWD. Shame on your Kirkman! It was a complete waste of time and money. I can't believe I made a special trip to the comic shop just for this! I can't even say I READ the issue because that would imply the issue actually had some words.

What did I get for my \$2.99? Count them, TWO double page spreads and about 5 minutes of enjoyment from

"Reading It". This was almost like looking at a zombie coloring book that had already been colored in. I expect this kind of lazy, hack filler issue crap from other publishers but not you and Image. I hope this is no indication of what to expect from the next 10 issues of "All Out War". If so, I'd re-dub it "All Out for Money".

I hope you knock it out of the park next issue.

Thanks for nothing.
Marc Cawiezel

Sometime during the 90s fans/critics equated splashes—and god forbid double page splashes—were hacky—and in a lot of instances, they were, but they're incredibly useful storytelling tools, that affect pacing and scope and, in this particular case, are much more complicated and time consuming for Charlie and Stefano to draw than talking heads... But are actually REALLY easy to write.... So, fuck... you might be right...

HE IS NOT RIGHT! Look, there will be a lot of spreads in this story because there will be a lot of big moments in this story. There have been a lot of two-page spreads and splash pages in this comic since the very beginning... it's just how I like to tell stories. The group opening fire and the zombies arriving are moments that deserved the focus of a two-page spread. Wouldn't have been as big a moment if it were told in a small panel. I mean... sheesh! Then again... I LOVE '90s comics.

Dear Rob,

It says a lot about a man in how he takes criticism. I will admit most of the nerds (of which I am sort of one, though I have gotten laid a bit more than most of them, most likely) who give you shit about guns shot from hands, zombies with selective hearing of gunshots, the survival rate of children with half their faces blown off from guns, etc., are very annoying.

Please, oh please, regale us with more stories of your sexual prowess...

YES PLEASE!

That being said, just because someone is annoying doesn't mean they don't make a valid point. From your responses to a lot of Letter Hacks hating, you seem to believe that your comic has few if any inconsistencies (apart from your admittance that preprogramed watches with lithium batteries probably would still be functioning even at End Times, so there would be no need for an estimated calendar—"Earth Abides" covered this well, several decades ago, and I recommend it if you're looking for fresh ideas), but to that I disagree. Not because you are a hack, or repetitive, or stretched too thin, or money grubbing—no, I still get your comic every month and it is still a quality product (now every three weeks, THAT is cool as shit, good on ya).

Here is some advice from a person you know nothing about other than a vague idea of how often he gets laid and what he thinks of a significant part of your life's work: no one is perfect. We make mistakes, and a mistake in a creative endeavor is only bad when it is not addressed with honesty and a sincere desire to avoid repeating similar mistakes in the future. You do not do that. You really don't. You make mistakes, but defend them to the grave, and make increasingly bizarre rationales for them,

and if you keep doing that you may very well actually take it to the grave and come back as a zombie-writer before you hit issue 150.

Ta-ta 4 n0wz,

Andrew Stone

I couldn't disagree with you more. That's a joke, and I would never argue with someone who gets laid as often as you do.

I don't know what specific incident you're talking about, but if it's the tiger thing, that guy was just wrong. Tigers totally roar. On other matters... when it's obvious that I have made a mistake, I sometimes will do a tongue in cheek defense of that mistake as a joke... but that may not come across well in text form.

I'm certainly not of the mind that this comic series or anything I've done is flawless. Although I AM pretty fond of most of my responses in these letters columns.

Hey guys!

First of all, congratulations on keeping the awesome flow steady for so many years. I started issue 1 about five years ago and binge read (is that even a thing?) until I was up to speed with the dreadful one month(ish) waiting for the next fix. I love the character development and the slow build and the amazing structured plots you've managed to maintain throughout the years without ever losing quality.

The reason i'm writing this e-mail, tho, is that I've just realized something (I literally just realized it and had to write this first ever e-mail to a comic team for me). That something is that even though we have some well developed strong three dimensional BADASS female characters in the book (which looking at the comic book world is already a great achievement, so kudos there), I've noticed that there aren't any female led group of survivors out there. Seems like leading is the job for a strong man. I'd love to see a group lead by a fierce gal whose leadership and overall capacities are parallel to that of Rick's or the Governor. Maybe a good gal, maybe a big bad sadistic she-Negan. Either way, I'd love to see that. Maybe you've thrown it around somewhere and I just forgot about it. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Anyway, not trying to criticize, I love the book and enjoy it every month, just getting through what I've realized.

May the force be with all of you!

Carlos

Not a bad idea... not a bad idea at all...

Has that issue not come out yet? Which issue is this... 119? What happens in this issue? Has it happened yet? All I'll say to this is stay tuned. (I'm currently finishing up issue 123... I lose track these days).

Oh Kirkman. Kirkman, m' man, what happened? Why do you insist on ripping off your customers? First the third Walking Dead novel was just a retelling of the Walking Dead issues containing the Governor vs the Survivors. But hey, maybe we'd get his side of the story. Oh, but oh, fool me once. Then I hear that it's going to be split into two parts. Not because it's going to be a Stephen King doorstopper (barely ~250 pages), but because you wanted to cash in on your fans in the most unethical of ways. And, as if that wasn't enough, you decided to make All Out War. The six issue series stretched, padded and put on a rack so that it finally became a 12 issue series. What happened? I know you're not lazy (4 comics, not including TWD, CEO of Skybound, COO of Image, writing for the TV show occasionally), so it's not like you're struggling for money. Is it greed? Laziness? I'm honest to God considering torrenting any and all of your future works if you keep this up.

Love,
Joshy-boy

The hate! The hate she flows like wine! Regarding AOW, I promise, we didn't pad these issues out any more than we did before.

Than we did before? Whose side are you on, Sean?

With All Out War... this storyline is huge. Just because we're putting it out faster doesn't mean it's 6 issues stretched into 12. It's actually been pretty difficult to contain the story in 12 issues.

Wait, I mean... I screwed up. Sorry. (That's for Andrew Stone.)

On the novel front... the situation is not ideal, but we were locked into a release date and the novel was growing out of proportion as we worked on it. The decision was made to split it into two books, since there was a natural breaking point and it would allow us to meet our deadline. So one novel became two. And I insisted on the "part one & part two" because I wanted it to be clear that it was all one story. We could have easily titled one "Fall of the Governor" and the other "The Governor's Legacy" and people would have been happy that we'd decided to do an additional book... but I felt the two books kind of worked better as one story. Part one is 256 pages long, The Road to Woodbury was 288 pages long. So that's comparable. Part two clocks in at 288 pages, same as The Road to Woodbury. So while the part one and two made you think we cut a book in two to make more money... what we actually did was decide at the last minute to tell a bigger story that required another book.

Also, and I suppose this is a further response to Andrew Stone. I'm not trying to argue and I don't want to come off as defensive. I'm really just trying to be honest here. I value the support of each and every one of you, and if you have a question or complain... I want to answer that. That's why we print mostly negative mail (aside from the fact that it's more fun)... those are the people I want to answer. Positive mail is great, and we read it... but a letters column where we said "thanks for reading" over and over would be boring, but most of all... pointless.

You cared enough to write in, Joshy-boy... and I appreciate this. I'm grateful for you support of The Walking Dead and the fact that you're currently unhappy and feel like I'm screwing you over... that's not good. The fact is The Walking Dead has grown into a huge multi-media thing with a LOT of moving parts. There will be times when there's a shitty video game or a really late behind the scenes book or a less than ideal split novel... things come up and nobody's perfect.

I promise I'll keep trying to make things work out as best as they can, though.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I realize you don't often print positive letters, so I'll keep it short..

This month, you're a breath of fresh fucking air.

Leading up to the last page of issue 117 I just knew that Negan was going to kill David, as I presume you wanted. I thought to myself, "wow, the Governor wasn't THAT outwardly crazy!" Sure enough the first thing you wrote in the "Letter Hacks" section of that issue was, "Can you imagine the Governor ever doing something like THAT?"

Well done sir.

Ok you can get back to your all out war with the haters.

Aaron Gordon
Buffalo, New York

I wrote that. Robert can take ALL the credit for the awesome story, but the blazing self-analysis? ALL ME. SEAN. THE GUY IN BOLD. (Do people think that Robert just has these back and forths with himself, to like, amuse readers/himself?) Are we confusing anyone else with these bold/italics formatting? What we're doing here is NOT revolutionary.

I should probably be gray or blue or something on top of being italicized. People do seem to lose track of who's talking sometimes. I love that we're getting compliments on your letters column commentary, though. Sigh.

Vox populi, motherfucker!

Dear Sean and Robert

First off, the standard praise. TWD is amazing - it really is. It revived my interest in comics across the board and it's an incredible achievement and testament to everyone that works on TWD that it has become a huge multi platform global success.

But...(there’s always one)...What’s going on with this All Out War arc? We were told to expect BIG things. Three issues in and well...I’m more than a little underwhelmed. I have to concur with the *haters* that this feels very much like another Governor story. I see at the end of 117 the comment about ‘would the governor have stopped a rape?’ - well... aren’t we a tad jaded there.

Nothing jaded to distinguish a serial rapist from a killer who actively prevents rape.

How great was your comment now, Sean?! Eh?! Eh?! Burn!

This is all evil stuff on Negan’s part. There’s no coming back from caving Glenn’s face in. It’s kind of like asking whether Heinrich Himmler would draw the line at strangling a puppy or would he be a softy and just drown it?

Ok, my position is a lot more shaky with Holly’s recent zombification...

Plus I’ve found, probably since Glenn died and that human ‘every day man’ left the book, that I give much less of a shit about the characters other than Rick, Carl and Andrea. Even then, I could probably get over their demise.

I guess I’m just hoping at the end of this storyline that the BIG reveal will be something completely new. Not that Negan has a human side, Rick becomes a bit bad, a few central characters die...We’ve been there, done that (and since this arc started I can now say I also have the T shirt). An untouched fully fledged city with a few inhabitants that has perhaps managed to wall itself off and the infrastructure it’s capable of building with the new personnel? A working aircraft and pilot? A cure? A reason for the outbreak? A look at the wider world? The return of Lori - come on... I know she isn’t really dead ;)

Daryl?!

With muchos appreciation and thanks

Sean F

Lori is dead! DEAD!

Rest assured ALL OUT WAR is taking us to some very new, very different and very exciting places. This will be a drastically different book starting with issue 127, but that’s all I’m going to say.

And only one issue a month! One goddamnit!

Sup Letter Hacks-

I have an answer for Josh in Edmonton in issue 117. The walkers’ pants don’t fall off because when they die and decompose the corpses bloat up and cause the pants to stick to the legs from all the sticky nasty puss stuff. Then eventually they decay further and lose weight but the pants are stuck to whatever flesh remains attached to bone.

God Robert and/or Sean, could you not be bothered to explain that to the man?

Ross

Napa, CA

Who really has time for science?

Not me!

Gentlemen,

Just finished 117. So... Holly is captured by big scary men and I’m supposed to be worried about her. So are we just forgetting that she stole Abraham from Rosita? C’mon. I can only assume that you haven’t forgotten and you are actually maneuvering Holly into the sanctuary so that she can get her face ironed as is customary for cheaters. What about Rosita? (I would be so good to her if she lived in Dallas and wasn’t a fictional character.) I know that the only reason that Holly is still alive is that Charlie really enjoys drawing her.

Holly didn’t cheat on anyone... but I guess you must be pretty happy to with how this issue ended, sicko... also, your pre-apocalypse sense of morality is unsettling.

I’ve got your 2nd TV series right here: Holly the Homewrecker meets Rosita and Abraham and tries to seduce him but he rejects her and she is thrown out of the group. Then your 2015 “companion” series becomes about all of the horrible things that happen to her as she wanders alone. I’d watch 10 seasons of that shit.

J. Moore
Team Rosita

Abraham didn’t love Rosita. It’s sad, and upsetting for Rosita, but don’t put that on Holly. Sheesh.

Hi there, good job on the comic blah blah blah. I have two questions.

Why is there only 1 issue December and 2 in January because of “the holidays”? Doesn’t releasing 2 in January make you work more in December? Sorry if that was a very stupid question.

Yes, we’ve had to work more this month, but a Wednesday Christmas release wasn’t ideal for a new issue, so we just pushed it.

Yeah, it has nothing to do with our work, it has more to do with distribution schedules over the holidays. We’re working on the March issues right now!

Will you consider doing 2 issues a week during season 5 as well?

NO.

Maybe. I hope Charlie doesn’t see this.

Bonus question: Will you end the series around issue 300? I trust you and stuff... but even like 500 issues is too much. That’ll be roughly 6 compendiums too. That’ll be so sexy on my bookshelf.

Thanks a lot, friend.
Teaghan, British Columbia, Canada

If Charlie and I aren’t into it and aren’t bursting with ideas and enthusiasm for the book... we won’t continue. But as it stands now... I’m not 100% sure I can get through the story I want to tell in 300 issues... maybe. This story has an ending... and we’re working toward it... we’re not treading water trying to hit a number. 500 issues is NOT too much, though. I think that’d be awesome... if all of them were at the same level of quality.

Hey guys. I’m a long time reader, and a first time writer. For a while, I watched joyfully Negan ripping everybody and everything to pieces with Lucille, and i really enjoy that arc. I also couldn’t stop thinking what kind of person Negan would be if he would swear in french. Ive loved the part 3 in all out war where negan realised he got shifted by Rick and gets out his “f**kin f**ker f**k f**k f**k f**k f**k f**k f**k f**k”. That part, in french, would become “ta*****ak d, e*ti de c*****s de sa*****nt de c*****re de c*****s de c*****s de ta*****ak de ca*****t cal***é d’épais de c*****s de m****e de ta*****ak”. French is an awesome swearing language. Maybe this guy would’ve been nicer if he could swear with more variety

I could take out the stars in the last phrases (which would become “tabarnak desti de caliss de dacramant de ciboire de criss de caliss de tabarnak de calissement calissé depais de criss de marde de tabarnak”), but i dont want young audience to read that. Wait, is there a young audience for this comic?

Keep up the good work guys!

Some french canadian guy
Gabriel

This is the golden ideal of a Letter Hack! Good job!

Yes. Bravo, Gabriel. Bravo.

Shit goes very wrong very early next issue. Happy New Year!

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you all then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

The fall of Alexandria... war isn't just about human casualties, and this round Negan took a page out of General Sherman's playbook and razed his enemies' property to the ground. And we're only at the midpoint of All Out War!

And hey, in the last week we've received as many letters as we normally do in a month. So after last issue's extended Letter Hacks, we're going to keep it going and see how folks react differently to death... and also get Robert to do some responsorial heavy lifting...

Oh, boy... this isn't going to be fun at all, is it? Here goes...

You destroyed my whole universe with captions. Shitfuck.

T.C.

Sorry about that (we're off to a good start).

I was hoping it wouldn't happen, but if it had to happen, I was hoping it would come later rather than sooner. Ezekiel has quickly become one of my favorite characters, and seeing what Shiva did for him sent a flurry of emotions through me. By the time I got to that last panel, I was a wreck. Not since Grant Morrison's "We 3" has a comic made me cry; I think that's one of the best compliments you can get. Keep up the good work, cat killer.

James Terzis

Can we all please work together to ensure that "cat killer" is not a nickname that sticks? I just wrote it, after all. Charlie actually DREW the death. If anyone deserves that nickname...

Shiva deserved the cover

Charlie Bonét

She got the cover before! Just be happy with what you get!

We could always put Shiva's ghost on a cover later...

Or a Skybound crossover with GHOSTED?!

Dearest Robert Kirkman,

Thanks so much for showing us what a gentleman Negan can be to the ladies. I bet he's cried a few vagina induced "man tears." He could have used any word for hair-pie, yet he chose the term "vagina" three times. As vulgar as he is, he didn't refer to her as having a cunt, slit, or pussy. Then he saves Holly from a raping! NEGAN FOR PRESIDENT!

Thanks,
Jordanna
Lexington, KY

That's all it takes to be president nowadays? Huh.

The bar is set really low here for all kinds of reasons. You're a gentlemen for "not raping" and "using the word vagina." I can't help but thing there needs to be some stricter criteria in place to achieve gentlemen status.

kirkman and crew,

love the all out war so far. i just have a few questions/criticisms (which i know you love.)

1. is 118 the first time ever in the book that you've had POV narration? I cant think of another time ever seeing it.

Yes, first time for first person.

Yeah... it's the first time, but it's really just a version of "voice over." I saw some people online complaining like I'd

put old school Stan Lee captions "And with a mighty tackle, Shiva fells no less than three, no FOUR zombies in one fell swoop!" Which... now that I think about it...

2. is POV going to be something we see more of in the book or were you just shaking things up a bit for All Out War?

It felt like the scene needed it. I reserve the right to change the format of this book as the story dictates. I may even start using establishing shots on a more consistent basis... maybe.

3 you said on talking dead recently that the more important a character is, the more dramatic you make their deaths. i just wanna point out that eric's death was less ceremonious than the tigers. I'm betting i will be one of the only letters mourning eric.

NOPE.

anyway my question is did you not think eric was that important of a character? he was only the one to bring rick into Alexandria. and he was one of your only gay characters. Is that why he didn't get an honorable death that will be overshadowed by a pet's? pfft. bigots.

keep up the great work
yours truly,
Brian Thomas
Bristol, RI

First of all, his boyfriend AARON was the one to bring Rick into Alexandria. And honestly, rules are meant to be broken. I'd argue Abraham's death was pretty casual/ abrupt. The fallout of the death actually counts as part of the death, too. And there will be a fair bit of fallout from Eric's death. I'll save a more in depth response on this matter for a later email I'm sure is coming up.

Dear Robert (De Niro) and (Frank) Sinatra,

I have definitely been mind blown by your guys comics. These are the first I have read and I am currently on issue 116. Great work guys! Don't worry, I'll buy the next two this week and probably read them within 5 seconds, they are all too good! Who would have ever guessed me to become a roamer?

Just a few questions though...

1.) You guys did "Rise of the governor", will there be a background comic or book about negan? His character, although menacing, is altogether amazing and I can't help but see him as a favorite. He's got his own distinct way of speaking and is over the top.

I wouldn't rule it out entirely, but there are no current plans.

2.) If/When negan dies (I am still only on issue 116, Kirkman kills characters so quickly, who knows.) will carl take his bat? He is a very fully developed character but I want a better idea of how his current situation will impact him and how he will learn from it.

Wait and see...

3.) Will negan be in the tv show eventually? That is something I would love to see!

The plan is for him to appear eventually, but it's not 100% guaranteed. Maybe something closer to 98%. But it won't happen any time soon. (Fingers crossed that the show continues to be successful and continues for many more seasons.)

4.) my family sometimes calls me hacksawhaley, partly because it's a good gamer name and partly because it sounds cool. If you end up naming a character after me who's good with a hacksaw... I would probably die of happiness. I'll send cookies.

I have plenty of cookies.

Keep walking,
Haley

P.S. Hi Sina!

I'm not Sina. The fact that you believe me to be makes me doubt your reading comprehension skills, hacksawhaley.

Sina is less mean-spirited and way funnier. Get it together, Haley! Or go buy Sina's current project Burn the Orphanage. It's rad.

I'm a huuuuge fan of this comic. I am actually reading issue #118 while I should be studying for my final exam on food-borne illnesses. But, may I just ask instead of keep wondering since issue 116, WHY the asscracks?? On the zombies, Holly AND Rick and the one guy bending over in issue 118 when Eric dies. They really are losing that much weight or do you, Robert or Charlie, really like asscracks?

I can only speak for myself, but I am totally pro-asscrack.

I'll speak for Charlie and say that the only thing he likes more than asscracks is drawing asscracks.

I'm interested in knowing and would you incorporate such into the TV show?? That would be too funny....

Keep up the amazing work!!!

Larisa
Toronto, Canada

You're asking for more asscracks in the TV show? I'll see what I can do. Also, at this point, I'm pretty sure asscrack should be two words, but I want to live in a world where we have one word dedicated to such a thing.

Robert & Sean,

Love the TV show and comic (even a little more so). Just got 118 on its release date yesterday. So I've got a few things to say to you guys that have been bugging me and you're going to listen. Okay?

Good. So, 1: Plumbers Butt's (this one's mainly for Charlie/Stefano) I know that you might be thinking that that's a little weird, and I know, but if you look back, I've realized that most people with a shirt that doesn't fit down over their waist, has a slight plumber butt showing. It happens in all the issues up to 113 through 118. Look and see, if you don't believe me! It happens at least once each of those issues. Just why is what I ask. is it really a crack, or their collar bone showing?

I will be asking Charlie just how deep his love of asscrack goes. This is getting a little worrying.

2: Rick's Beard (again)
Maybe he apparently looks cooler or tougher? I don't quite get it. Actually, for some reason, he reminds me of that guy in the Dr. Pepper commercials. All grizzly looking, and almost looking like he could chew some bark.

Are you saying you don't like him with a beard? What do you have against beards?

3: Everyone's Hair
After over a year of everyone having... oh let's say about 5 showers, not once have I seen someone's hair looking all matted or filled with zombie guts. It's always nice and wavy, like they take a shower once a day, using shampoo and conditioner (particularly Rick's and Jesus' hair). Well SCREW THAT! I want to start seeing some matted hair. Not this straight, wavy hair that's blowing in the breeze.

They have showers regularly in Alexandria. And hygiene is something that would be important to all the people in these communities... so it would be a priority for them to have some kind of system in place.

4: ALL OUT WAR being broken up in to two separate parts for the TP's
Who was the genius who chose to do that?!?! That just completely ruined the whole awesome "craziest volume ever in Walking Dead history". If you can still, could you pretty please make it all one volume, with no part one and part two rubbish?

Our trades are always 6 issues, and you think we'd make the trade readers wait for their fix?... Actually, screw them, they don't read this page... But if we ever do collect it in one volume, we'll try to do something cool to make it worth checking out...

Look at Mackiewicz being so coy. There's actually a plan for just such a thing, and it was his idea! Stay tuned...

Oh, look at that! The EDITOR has a useful idea. THAT'S a comics' first!

Yep, that's about it. Thank you and hope you put this into the back page columns with all the other cool kids. Thanks for always make me look forward to something after school once a month (and every other week) on Wednesdays!

Gavin Z
Chicago

Welcome to Letter Hacks, Gavin!

Fuck Shiva - You killed Eric! You bastard!

A damn tiger gets a bigger send off than the demise of 1/2 of a heroic couple? An unheralded, romantic, heroic, team-oriented, zombie-killing gay male couple, with no "Bruce Wayne and his underage ward" overtones?

I guess Eze-K and Shiva were a heroic couple, but, come on. Michonne is taking Shiva's place, the writing's on the walls - and tigers don't do three-ways. Not safely, anyway. Shiva gotta go. But Eric?

Kinda pathetic last page, really. Belonged to Aaron. Sigh . . . but I'm still on board this train. Even amidst all the crybaby "bring back Shiva" letterwriters. Wah hah. But, I will agree with them on one thing - you've lost that loving feeling - for now!

Eric Schroeder

Your namesake shall be honored, and his death will lead to a lot of stories that will bring Aaron to the forefront, so storytelling-wise... I think it's a very important death.

Dear Kirkman & co.,

I have some questions about the TWD universe:

(1) After all this time since the zombie outbreak, does anyone have any clue whatsoever as what is the cause for the dead turning alive? Do people consider it a modern plague or rather a supernatural condition?

They're too busy surviving. It's never been a priority for people.

(2) I understand that once the dead turn alive again they can be killed a second time. Is there then some life expectancy for this second life of mindless body activity? I mean, will the zombies eventually starve out and die for sure?

There are certain rules and things that will be revealed that shed some light on what the rules are. We delved into this a little bit in the past with Eugene finding the "older" zombie. We'll see more of that shortly.

(3) Why do zombies bite the living---is it out of aggression, like rabies, or is it for food consumption? Is their metabolism functional to digest food? Do you have a theory of your own about the undead condition that tells you what a zombie can do and what it cannot?

It's a compulsion driven by some sort of false hunger message the body is sending combined with the lack of reasoning in the brain that would tell you not to just eat whatever moves around you. They don't NEED to eat, it provides nothing for them survival-wise.

(4) My final question: in father Gabriel's opinion as an expert in religious matters, what happens to the souls of the dead when they turn? And what are his thoughts about these pseudo-apocalyptic events?

Daniel

We'll hear more from Gabriel soon. I wouldn't want to speak for him here.

I was so excited for ALL OUT WAR. My excitement even overcame the apprehensions I had about the bi-weekly schedule. But so far... damn, this thing is a mess. Some complaints:

1a. Why didn't Rick and his merry band of followers just shoot Negan in 115-116 when he was standing on the ledge outside the factory? Christ, he was right there. One shot, problem solved.

But then the Saviors would've opened fire and EVERYONE would've died. Not a great plan.

Yeah! So there!

b. For that matter, why did Negan wait so long to fire at Rick and company? They were just STANDING there. And Rick never saw that coming? He had everyone stand around with their hands in their pockets and let a few guys take a bullet in the head just so he could be equitable with the guy they are out to kill? I would've laughed at the panels of them scrambling when the gunshots started if I hadn't been so disappointed. What an incredible letdown to start this story.

Negan wanted to use Gregory to end the conflict peacefully. Negan didn't WANT a battle. He didn't want to kill the people that provide his community with food and supplies.

2a. In 118, Gregory says, "I was able to smooth things over with Negan...This could have been something we couldn't come back from...We were lucky I was able to talk Negan down." WTF? Didn't Negan just give him the boot? Gregory still thinks Negan won't retaliate against the Hilltop even though Jesus and a slew of other Hilltop guys are at the factory fighting?

Gregory is a braggart, and is very insecure so he's always lying to make himself seem like he's more capable than he actually is. So he's overselling what he did there. But

also he was returning with the few fighters The Hilltop had given to the war effort, so the Hilltop was officially out of the war, until Maggie brought them back in. So everything Gregory was saying made sense. Negan had no reason to retaliate against the Hilltop... The Kingdom and Alexandria on the other hand...

b. How did Gregory get away from the factory? Several panels of Negan on the ledge make it seem like he's standing above a pit of rabid zombies. At the very least, there's a wall of zombies between Negan and Rick, right? So when Gregory gets punted off the ledge, I half assumed he died. But...what? He stood up after a long fall, walked through a horde of zombies, past Rick's line of fish-in-barrels, and caught up with the Hilltop cowards who walked away? On that note: if those Hilltop guys somehow thought Gregory was protecting them from Negan, why didn't they go back and fight once they realized Gregory had been discarded like the sack of shit he is?

Gregory was able to slip out and meet up with the retreating Hilltop people before the hordes of zombies showed up. You're right, though... I kind of cheated. I didn't want to take up valuable pages showing that Gregory left out of another exit before the Sanctuary (the factory where the Saviors live) was surrounded. It was this exit Dwight was directed to take a group out through, but didn't end up leaving before Holly drove the truck through the gate. It just didn't feel like an important enough scene to devote pages to, when you could just assume he got out from how he arrived at the Hilltop. But it is a little unclear, and I'm sorry for that.

c. In 118, Gregory tells Maggie he doesn't know who she is. Wasn't he lurking around and flirting with her in past issues? Did he forget about that?

It's another running joke that he never remembers her name, and even fails to recognize her. He's a shitty person. He's so full of himself that other people don't register with him. He's that boss that never remembers that he met your wife, because your wife isn't important to him.

3. Excluding cliffhangers, the dialogue splash pages in this book feel like a rip-off. The one in 118 is easily the worst yet. Maggie trusts Rick Grimes? No shit? I've been watching her follow him around for the past seven or eight or years of my life. Of course she trusts him! Or did she feel the need to reaffirm her loyalty after someone told her Rick lined up his men for the firing squad outside Negan's factory?

Sure, we know Maggie trusts him, but she's selling it to people who don't give a fuck about Rick and have no reason to trust him.

It's a big moment spread. Rick get's them ALL THE TIME (I know this because I buy most of them off Charlie after they're drawn because I LOVE, repeat LOVE two-page spreads of heads). Rick says something important... it often times gets a spread. That spread is actually the key moment of Maggie's life in this book. It's the moment where she emerged a leader, forming a bond between the Hilltop and Rick's people that will continue past this arc. It's a big deal. You'll see.

3. I was completely thrown off by the voice-over in 118. I had no idea who was talking, or how it was even possible that there was a voice-over in the first place. Has there ever been a captioned narrative in this book before? Even if there is a precedent for it, it was still a mess. Six pages went by without any indication of who the narrator was. In that time, I thought it might be Jesus or anyone else in the scene being shown. Ezekiel's story was so similar to the scene with Rick I wasn't sure where anyone was or what was happening. Even after I determined who was talking, I had to backtrack to realize the story had jumped to a different location. Ultimately, it caused me to gloss over the death of Eric and Shiva, which is a shame.

At this point... I think a lot of this comes down to reading comprehension. Is that too dickish of me to say? Not knowing who was talking was kind of the point. Not knowing where the person talking was or when it was going to factor into what you were seeing, was also kind of the point. I'm told the scene worked very well for others. I'm sorry you didn't dig it. I wouldn't expect it to become a regular thing, but I do feel like the scene and the way I wanted to tell this part of the story, demanded that I change things up a little.

I was worried that the bi-weekly schedule would wreck this story arc, and there is no excitement left in me to overcome those fears. Kirkman brags in the letters column of 118 about how far ahead he is. Seriously, I would rather get one issue a month that is well thought out and filled with meaningful content than two books a month that don't get the time or attention needed to be engaging. Sometimes ideas just need to sit for a while. That doesn't seem to be happening right now, and the book is a mess.

Preston Cram

I respectfully disagree. And I'm not spending any less time on any of these issues, I'm just spending less time on other things. Regardless, our regular schedule will resume shortly.

Hey guys,

I'm a huge fan of the show and comics, I make a special trip out to grab the comics every wednesday. I'm glad to see the good guys got an inside man working for them. I'm interested to see how Dwight influences the war and where his loyalties are, I can tell he's not another Martinez. Who wouldn't hate the man who stole his wife and then burnt off the side of his face with an iron. (very sick and original btw, loved it) That being said, who do you think would win in a crossbow battle, Dwight or Daryl Dixon?

Dwight.

It depends on whether or not Dwight has used his eye drops recently. That eye dries out quickly.

I was also wondering where you came up with the name Negan? Being the nerd I am I've looked it up and no where else in history does it appear.. It feels weird any time I say it.

Anxiously awaiting the return of the show. Happy Holidays,

Tommy

Okay, I usually bullshit my way through answers like this, but for now, for the devoted letters column readers who have gotten this far (all ten of you) I'm going to answer 100% positively. I wanted the guy to have a negative sounding name. "Negus" was the first thing that popped into my head, but after a bit of research, I realized that that was rattling around in my head because of my deep love for Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. The leader of the Ferengi is the GRAND NAGUS... which was too close to Negus for me. So he became NEGAN.

You goddamn Ferengi loving bastard....

Why did they kill Shiva?! WHY?!?! I feel bad for Ezekiel, she must've been the only one he cared deeply for when this zombie apocalypse began. Before he met Michonne (not sure if I spelled it right lol). Poor guy. Also, are Rick and Andrea gonna tie the knot? They've practically known each other since the beginning and have mutual understanding to each other better than most who would survive this whole thing. This was just a thought, been a Walking Dead comic fan since the beginning, OOOOOVER HERE! Keep up the great work, it helps everyone who reads prepare if this should ever happen!

Joey

A Walking Dead wedding issue? Huh.

We have sorta done it before... we'll see.

In Letter Hacks at the end of #118 Tony from Chicago pondered as to what the ladies of TWD do on their periods. I can't speak for them but if the apocalypse hit tomorrow I wouldn't leave home without my menstrual cup.

Menstrual cup: a small, flexible cup made of medical grade silicone worn internally to collect menstrual fluid. Can be worn for up to 12 hours at a time, emptied, sanitized and reinserted. A single cup can last for five years before having to be replaced.

The more you know.

Thank you. Oh, it continues...

But seriously these things are awesome. Pad/tampon industries don't want you to know about them because it would effectively put them out of business. Instead of spending up to \$10 a month you could be spending \$35 for five whole years. I have personally found them the most effective, comfortable and sanitary product I've used. And you don't have time to be changing a tampon every four hours with walkers on your tail!

And of course the obligatory--huge fan of the show and the comics. Never had a reason to write in till now. Sharing a possibly life saving zombie apocalypse tip for half the population.

Sarah

Well, there you go. Thanks for writing in, Sarah. Hopefully you've sold a few menstrual cups to the fine folks reading this comic, and yes, it's so funny that you wrote in because that is exactly what all the women in this comic are doing.

It's just so practical.

Next issue, we learn about the risks of making ammunition! See you in two weeks!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Hey, this issue marks that halfway point in our run! I hope you guys are digging it. There's a lot of cool stuff to come.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

R.I.P. Denise. Is Eugene next?

Now, the last thing I would do to Eugene is flash my scrotum in his face. That's the #1 reason you know Dwight is praying for Negan's downfall: he didn't relay the message on Eugene fighting dirty.

You're onto something.

dear robby, charlie, steffy, russy, sean-ee, cliffy, and davey

holly got me! you fuckers, I turned that last page of issue 119 and oh shit there it is, I really thought negan was handing her over safely, at most maybe a nice fat iron burn on her face, but that bastard surprised me and is just as ruthless as i hoped he would be! He is definitely my favorite villain and probably my favorite character in the book! That being said please don't ruin him by putting him in the tv series because the show is for dumb people and the comic is for smrt people. further more, please don't base a novel or video game on him either because those have been pooppy also thus far. I really try to enjoy all the crap that spews from the butthole of the walking dead franchise monster (I picture this as jaba the hut with kirkmans head) and you know what that means? It means your comic is so good I'll buy really crappy other things because it says walking dead on it, thanks guys!

kebbby kebbster
Sarnia On, Canada

Kebby, I don't know if you were trying to be a contrarian, but you basically don't want anything that everyone else wants. Tough shit. We make the decisions. But hey, I'm totally with you on the Holly thing!

Is he saying I look like Jabba the hutt?

I read your comics like the Bible and I watch your show like a teenage girl watches Gossip Girl. That being said: the Walkers are completely exposed to the elements at all times, which means that the rate in which their bodies should be decaying down to skeleton and some tissue would be within a year. Seasons have changed in the story and 10 years of my life have gone by and by now I have half expected the Walker's brains to be deteriorating into mush, ending their zombie lives. The only explanation I can think of is that the virus itself slows down the decaying process. Am I on the right track?

Jacob Taylor
Eugene, Oregon

You're on the right track. Whatever is making them walk around is also keeping them from rotting down to bones in a matter of weeks.

I started reading just before All Out War, soooo I'm

down for a good old-fashioned blood orgy. You two are good at what you do... obviously. I jumped into this story in the middle of an arc with no prior knowledge of the characters and I genuinely wanted to get the next issue and now this is one of my favorite books. But seriously, lets cut the fat!!!

Billy Badass

This is how I started reading most comics: jumping right in the middle of a storyline. My first issue of Uncanny X-Men was the last of Chris Claremont's 16-year run. And I couldn't have enjoyed it more!

That's the way it should be... so bravo, Billy. But just in case, the whole story is readily available in TPB form... so y'know... you could read up on the past.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Issues numbers 118 and 119 have been very exciting, and heartbreaking. Not only did we lose Shiva, but Eric, as well. It's so sad for Aaron. One of the reasons why I read the series, is because it has characters that I can relate to. For me, being a gay male, it was amazing to see a loving gay couple be depicted in your stories. None of the characters were ever judgmental or upset that they were gay, but accepted them for what they were; survivors, just like them. Now, Aaron, has no one. It was nice to see him in mourning, and that Heath came to console him for his loss. Pretty tear jerking moment. But the question remains is will Aaron survive? We still have a long way to go before the end of the story.

Kill Aaron? You wouldn't do that, too... would you?

We'll just have to see... maybe everyone dies.

And now, we have the shocking ending to issue 119. It was upsetting to see that Holly was turned. Was hoping she would be okay, but what's done is done. And when Negan shouted for his group to attack, I gasped from sheer terror. What a cliffhanger! Good thing is we only have to wait for another two weeks for the outcome of this issue. Great to see Rosita again. Of course, who will survive this story arc? I'm biting my nails from the suspense of it all. And I did read that it will be a "different" series once this arc is done. So far, I'm enjoying the books immensely, though. And keep it up. WD is the comic book on the top of my reading list, and will be for a long time. Thank you and can't wait for the next issue.

Eddie

Thanks for reading. I promise we'll try to pack in only the coolest of stuffs into each issue as we move forward... I'm writing issue 127 right now... and it's going to be a very different book after All Out War... but I think you'll all like it. I promise.

I am currently collecting your fine comics (I started getting the new issues about 6 months ago and I am now on a quest to get all of them, including every different cover) and on issue 77 in the Letter Hacks, a man proposed to a woman. Do you have any idea if she said yes?

Joe

If you said yes, reader, give us a shout and catch us up!

I'm worried that because we never got an update on that, that the woman said no... but really... that's what you get for proposing in the back of The Walking Dead. It's not a very romantic comic. He should have waited around for Sex Criminals to get published and proposed in the back of that.

Your letters column is annoying me.

I love it, but man-o-man are there a lot of people that have gotten into the mood of telling you how to write the books and/or complaining about your money-hungry ways! To be fair, I'm only part of the way through this month's column, but I had to write on in and get all opinionated.

1) Make money. There is nothing wrong with a comic writer making money and offering products such as books, hats, shirts, and more. I hate the idea of someone doing something great and NOT getting money for it. Your products are great and the choice is always that of the consumer.

Exactly.

2) Write your stories. Seriously. I enjoy them and hope you write for a long time coming. I've written in before and offered my 2-bit "hypothesis" of what may or may not occur or lamenting the death of a character - in the spirit of fun and "geek"-festing. However, to demand a change or tell you what or how to write seems a bit much. Accusing you of being a money-grubbing rip-off artist is horrid. I would LOVE to see comic creators make more money - then we'd get even more great comics. (caveat: I do have a real hate for variant covers, but that's my problem)

And you don't have to buy those variant covers you hate. It's all very democratic. On the writing critique side of things... don't worry about it. I think people giving their opinion only proves how invested they are in a story and that's what you want. I'm thankfully always writing ahead of their suggestions, so even if I wanted to change course, it'd be too late... so it really doesn't influence me all that much at all.

Pacing in comics has changed drastically over the years and as an older fan, I sometimes lament the fact that the stories are told on "trade-paperback-time." That said, I never would say that you are ripping anyone off! The stories are great - and maybe the pacing is what keeps me desperate for the next issue even before I put the current one down.

Anyhow - I just had to send this rant along after the first few letters I've read. You've often had me wondering where things were going, and even questioning whether I was going to continue reading, but in every case you've come through and engaged me again. So, you have a lot of credibility as far as I'm concerned and will continue to have creditability as long as you remain your own voice.

Regards,

Frank Bergdoll
Calgary, Alberta

This was the angriest letter in support of us. That's a tough tone to pull off. Thanks, Frank!

Yeah, nice job!

Robert and Sean (mostly Robert)

YOU LIED. YOU ARE A LYING LIAR. YOU SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE HARM TO ANIMALS IN TWD! Then you killed poor Shiva... AND SHIVA WAS COOL! If you don't remember saying that check the letter hacks of the issues after Ben dissected that cat...

What is it with you folks going through old Letter Hacks and bringing them back up? Letter Hacks are not in continuity! Except for the one where Robert raves about Blockbuster's DVDs by mail/return in store service. NOW he's a Netflix guy. What's up with that, turncoat?

Blockbuster doesn't do streaming! I never used Netflix DVD mailing service! Boo! I'll never plug another thing in this letters column again. No lie... you can take that promise to the bank!

Do you guys have a Netflix account? House of Cards and Orange is the New Black are both excellent! You should give them a shot.

I have a question however... why did you kill off Shiva? Was it because you were sick of complaints in letter hacks? Were you just sick of Ezekiel having a tiger?

Second, why u no tell us truth?

Was killing Shiva Sean's idea? I certainly hope not.

My Twitter avatar is a tiger, and that was looooong before Shiva made the scene. You can't pin this shit on me!

It seemed like a good idea at the time. It's going to lead to a lot of cool moments with Ezekiel. You'll see.

And in issue #118 WHERE DID CARL'S HUGE MUSCLES COME FROM?!

He's been working out!

Anyway, nice comic I guess, apart from killing Shiva. R.I.P. Shiva. You will always be remembered.

Ben Linford

Thanks for writing, Ben!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Walking Dead is the best comic ever! I am an avid Star Wars Dark Horse comics fan, but I look forward to the Walking Dead each month with the anticipation of a 5 year old Christmas morning! However, I must say I am disappointed the past several issues with Negan. You made him such a badass, and now he seems like a wimp.

After crushing Glenn's skull, ironing that guys face, beating Rick into oblivion a few good times, and gutting Spencer, he seems lame now. He doesn't even swear as much. And most of the time, he seems confused. He seemed invincible at first, and now he seems vulnerable. Darth Vader NEVER appeared to be weak in any comic book issue. Neither did the Governor. The Governor was flawed, but weak? Never.

Comic book Darth Vader sounds reaaaaaaaal boring. Vader couldn't even kill his own kid in the movies. What a punk!

There are many sides to Negan, you haven't seen them all yet. There were many scenes in the movies where Darth Vader was weak as hell.

You built this guy up to be such a destroyer, now you are tearing him down like a stack of falling cards. I am not longer interested in seeing him in a great battle, because

you have put too much of a human element in him. Part of the fun, was thinking he was this big, huge, inhumane animal. Now he's just another character that needs to be killed off...

Christopher Curkendall

WE'LL see... WE'LL SEE...

Hello TWD team!

I just got done reading #119 and saw the letter hack from the 2 page splash hater. Fuck him, that shit is awesome. A comic is not just about the storyline, that's what books are for. It's also about the visual aspect. Keep it rockin Charlie!

Splash advocate
Chicago

Charlie IS rocking. Not only is he finishing up #126 right now, he's also a drummer! That is the definition of ROCK.

Wow... nice... comment... Sean. You're really... on fire this issue.

Charlie is awesome, though. Especially teamed up with Stefano. They're almost as awesome as two-page spreads.

Kirkman,

First, I wanted to say, "Thanks!" "For what?," you say. For probably getting me fired one day. I'm a fan of the show, but the comics have really captured my imagination. I find myself daydreaming about the craziest walking dead world stuff. About how to fortify chain link fence, about building a fortresses out of old cars (feel free to use that one), about new ways to use herds of zombies as WMDs. Let me stop here for a minute and write a disclaimer: I am not one of your usual fans, meaning a mental midget that believes a zombie apocalypse is actually possible, that's why I said it captured my imagination.

Why are you guys so mean? "Mental midget?" and earlier one of you said the show is for "dumb people." We're all in this together, people. If you like The Walking Dead... it's not like you're cooler than another person who also likes The Walking Dead. You're the same in that respect.

Anyway, I find myself daydreaming when I'm doing something boring like reviewing budgets or writing reports. You are single handedly responsible for reducing my productivity at work. I know that sounds strange coming from a fan. Like I said before, I'm not the average fan, meaning I'm not on disability (for "mental health problems") living in my mom's basement.

Seriously, dude?

Anyway just wanted you to know I love the comic and you are probably single handedly responsibly for my eventual dependence on unemployment.

Steven L. from South Carolina

I have the opposite problem. All day I have to read scripts and talk to artists. So what do I get the daydream about? Fucking budgets and TPS reports? I dunno, man. I gotta figure out ways to ruin my productivity SOMEHOW...

As long as you're nicer about it than Steven L. is, Sean... you'll be fine.

Dear TWD Team:

Please, Heath must die.

All Out War is going to knock off some characters. I get it. Please kill Heath. What value has his character brought to the story? None that I have seen. I mean, I see Heath and my first thought is, "Who is that lady?" Then I realize it's Heath. And . . . I am like "Really. Dude looks like a lady." So disappointing. His main role in issue #119 is giving a hug? Come on. After all, this is "All Out War." I think it is the first comic book figure I feel sorry for. Do him a favor. Kill him off in a glorious fashion. Least he deserves.

Holly brought more to the story. She was well drawn. Nice curves to her. And, now dead. Ugh.

Thomas Gonzalez
Parker, Colorado

Oh, you wanted Heath to die? Would you settle for a maiming?

Heath is awesome. You're going to be sad when he's gone...

Robert,

As you know, I've been reading a long time. And now I've been collecting for nearly 100 issues. Characters have come and gone, for sure: Dale, Glenn, Abraham, Lori. A full year of All Out War is nearly halfway through, huh? I just gotta say that as good a read as TWD still is, I agree with Javier Legnoverde from Melbourne who wrote in Letter Hacks in #119 that "each issue is way too short and one month between issues is too long to wait". A base analogy, to be sure, but accurate.

So, Holly is a biter now, huh? I know because she bit Denise. Denise is a fine character, actually; be a shame to see her go. Even more B-level characters I'd like to see more of, from this issue: Rosita, Nicolas, and I guess Gregory...he's the Two-Face-looking second to Negan, right?

More Rosita and Nicholas in your future, for sure. And it's Dwight, not Gregory. I can't tell if you're doing this on purpose.

I don't think he is. That's what makes him awesome.

Hopefully after AOW we'll have some new characters, too. New characters, new locales....there's really not much New you can do with the Biters/ Roamers is there? I was thinking though: Maybe the Biters can learn to use guns!? They are pretty vicious in general, and may even retain Some of their former human knowledge. Funny, all the letters I've sent you guys, I don't think I've even mentioned the term Letter Hacks before. And, finally: Better than All-New X-Factor #1! Better than Black Widow #1! THIS is The Walking Dead!

Cheers,

Andrew J. Shaw

Now that's a cover blurb we can really run with.

Get on that, Sean.

Next issue... Eugene plays by prison rules, and one side figures out new ways to fight dirty.

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be awesome! See you in a couple weeks!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I love how Negan implements one of his best war strategies just as major cracks are appearing in his squad. With only four issues of All Out War left, the Walking Dead team is mashing its foot on the accelerator and not letting off anytime soon.

I also imagine a lot of you are watching new episodes of the show right now and, hey! How about Abraham, Rosita and Eugene? Pretty cool, right?

Oh, yeah! That episode has aired by now, hasn't it? Man, Michael Cudlitz, Christian Serratos, and Josh McDermitt are GREAT, GREAT, GREAT additions to the cast. I think you guys are really going to love them on the show.

Let's answer some mail!

Hey guys!
Just finished 120 & I can't get that gritty scene with Dwight at the wall out of my head. He has quickly become one of my favorite characters. Our half-burned hero mowing down Negan's unsuspecting militia made for an undeniable classic moment! I just really hope he doesn't turn out to be a Martinez-like double agent. Would your merch department consider putting out a Dwight T-shirt? I would so buy that!

Sincerely,

Ross Blair
Richmond Hill, GA

If Dwight t-shirts could get us Scarface merch money, deal. For right now, we're going to hold off on new merch ideas until All Out War shakes... out. We all saw what happened with that whole Shiva thing.

It's pretty funny how I don't tell our merchandising team about anything coming up in the comic. The fact that we still sell "EZEKIEL HAS A TIGER" shirts when "EZEKIEL DOESN'T HAVE A TIGER ANYMORE" really cracks me up!

To my dearest Walking Dead Team,

Alas...where do I begin?

Poor Denise.
Poor Heath.
Poor...Davis? Yeah...even Davis.

Amidst all the chaos and destruction, issue 120 was definitely not a letdown. Negan gets to be all cra-cra outside the gates while Rick and his crew regret skipping the search for fire extinguishers with Glenn on one of his safety runs (RIP, Glenn). Totally awesome sauce in a can, this issue was. But may I make a suggestion, if you will, on the return of a character I so dearly miss.

Shiva.

Seriously...we didn't see a body, y'all...bring that tiger back in some sort of dramatic fashion...a la flying through the air with claws fully extended and taking out one of the saviors in the process. Issue 126, perhaps??? To put the cherry on top, give him an eye patch and we'll allude to our very own 'eye of the tiger' metaphor. Trust me, eye patches make everyone cooler. Cough, cough... the Governor?!? Am I right? Of course I am.

Anywho...congratulations on making this book my favorite to read every (other) Wednesday. Till next we meet, parting is such sweet sorrow. Keep it classy, but always with a touch of sassy.

Your most dedicated dead-head,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

PS. Shiva LIVES!!!

And so do the "Ezekiel has a tiger" t-shirts available at thewalkingdead.com! But hasn't TWD always had an odd relationship with leaving its animals' fates ambiguous? It's been over four years and I'm still trying to figure out what happened to Buttons the horse.

Buttons literally DISAPPEARED, didn't she/he? We can admit that in the letters column, right? I think I forgot about the horse.

Dear walkers (maybe except Sean),

Even though I'm 26, I have never read nor even checked a comic book ever in my life until 6 months ago that I got a hold of the first 6 issues of TWD, and as a million people have guessed by now, loved it, even more than the series. a couple of things though:

1. First I wanna give a big thank you to the team behind TWD, not only you Robert, but also the art team especially Charlie and Cliff, that seem to not be thanked enough by some of the readers. Sina, Sean, Tony and even Rus have done a great job too, and we'll see how it goes with the new additions for the AOW, but since both those guys have been with the book for over 9 years, and they also did a bang up job issue after issue, they need some special thanks every now and then.

Some, but let's not go overboard with it, okay?

2. Really Sean? I didn't expect that from you, I mean an spoiler right in the middle of the letters? "Next issue, we learn about the risks of making ammunition". Sure we all have our own theories on what each piece of the story might turn out, but an spoiler like that it just sucks the joy out of it. After reading that sentence, my mind (and alot of others I assume) will go straight to only 2 of the possibilities: Either an accident (explosion) would happen in the little shop where Eugene is making the ammo, or, Negan will find the shop right away and gets it under his control, possibly hostage Eugene and the rest. The latter is more likely especially now that Negan has stopped for a bit on the road.

If “right in the middle” actually means “right at the end,” sure. We run teasers at the end of every issue because some people want a taste. And if you don’t, just skip on over those bits.

Also, indicating something might happen is not a spoiler. SAYING EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENS is a spoiler. Like if I said, hey, Lucille turns into a rocket next issue... that would be a spoiler... if it were true... and MAYBE it is.

Sure, nothing’s certain yet, but I mean come on man, I understand you’re excited about the next issues as you’re among the very few people who know what’s going to happen in near feature, who wouldn’t be, but please, pretty please consider us readers too, even if you really have to point out something like that, the least you can do is put a spoiler tag in uppercase letters before the paragraph, so those of us that don’t like being spoiled can just ignore it.

I’m not some fan running my yap because “I know more than you.” That’s never been my personality. The problem is we’re all pretty savvy about storytelling nowadays, so sure, with even the tiniest bit of info you can suss out what direction a story might be headed in. But I’m sick of our spoiler-phobic society where every miniscule bit can be perceived as a spoiler. We’re not in the business of spoiling our stories because... that’s just dumb. And I don’t think we’re dumb.

In the case... isn’t EUGENE tied up on the cover for issue 121? The cover that was a couple pages after the letters column? These covers themselves are spoilers if you have a broad enough definition. Come on, people--cut us some slack!

I hope it doesn’t happen again, but just in case, Rob, I for the rest of us, am giving you permission to hit Sean in the head next time he does give away the story, and if he said anything, tell him to talk to me, OK? thanks.

Till next issue (that now thanks to Sean I can wait for more than the last 6 ones ... sigh)

Iman

I don’t need permission to hit Sean on the head. Never have and never will need permission--I hit him on the head all the time.

If you want to grab my leg under the table in the diner... now that’s when you need to ask.

Madmen,

I have a confession. Ever since the first issue with Negan, I have heard one and only one voice for him. Through all the curse-ridden atrocities he’s committed, and all the home-brewed morality tales he’s concocted, only one voice rings out in my head. Every skull-bashing, gut-slashing, soul-smashing act that has ever been performed by Negan has been flourished with the ironic inclusion of one very particular voice.

Mitt Romney.

I can’t imagine Negan as some gruff Southern gas station attendant turned bad, or some variety of typical sleazy character. His voice is too sure, too unapologetic, and the thought of a post-apocalyptic Mitt Romney turning into a strong-armed, poetically violent King of the hill is too much fun.

Ian Cook
Syracuse, NY

This was one of two emails we received this month that pegged Romney as the voice of Negan, which was just... weird. And I have no advance knowledge of Negan’s life pre-apocalypse, so... fun theory.

I’m running with it!

To TWD Crew,

I have finished up with issue 120, and am so far very pleased. All Out War is living up to the standard I had given it after its buildup and for that I say thank you. However, the one question I have is, what is the time frame of the last six issues? Since All Out War started with 115, has it been a week? a month? It is hard to tell. It seems like it has been a mere matter of days, but to me the term ‘War’ upholds a longer amount of time than that. I know we are only half way through, but at this point I am very curious. Are we gonna start seeing snow soon, as if time jumped way ahead or will this be a quickly resolved feud?

Either way, I know it will be awesome. Keep doing what you guys are doing, you know your shit.

Eric Miles

Here’s how I think it breaks down: #115 & 116 happens over the course of a day. #117 is another day. #118 could be a week, with all the quick, smaller attacks on the outposts. And then #119 + 120 are another day. So like, two weeks at most?

Also, “war” does not denote any kind of time frame. A war can be one single day... it can have many battles... or one battle. But it’s just a conflict between two forces. Your other term... “feud...” man... those things can go on for DECADES. A feud doesn’t have to be a short amount of time.

Truly, in the saga of the 120 issues of THE WALKING DEAD there are so many characters as readers We grow to know, emphasize with, root for and love, as much as villains we grow to loathe and root for their demise. A testament to Kirkman’s skill as a writer, we are saddened, shocked and/or thrilled when these characters meet their end, whether quick, unexpected or brutally drawn out, but few of the characters have been given such a blindingly scintillating moment to shine as DAVIS. We barely knew you, at least your end was pretty much the most outrageously hilarious thing in the comic yet. Way to work your six panels Dude!

-KEN
San Francisco, CA

P.S. As much as I commend the writing, a big thing that makes THE WALKING DEAD work for me every month is Charlie Adlard’s supreme command of Facial Expression. While a fantastic artist and storyteller on all counts, his ability to subtly fluctuate mood in the character’s expressions totally supports and underlines the emotional core of the book. Few Comic Illustrators do this well, let alone with such thoughtful grace. It’s a huge part of what I love and look forward to about each issue.

RIP Davis. May all of us die with full boners. (Those of us that have them, and all that...)

All praise for Charlie Adlard must always be relegated to the postscript. It had been decreed!

P.S. I love you, Charlie!

Greetings to Robert and Sean.
It was a crappy week...

And I won’t go into details or anything, but I can say that kicking back and listening to you guys chatting about Charlie’s obsession to draw cracks takes a load off my mind...

Anyways, enough about that, I have some questions...

**People ask what it takes to get into Letter Hacks...
NUMBERED QUESTIONS.**

1.When are we going to see more Earl Sutton???

This issue!

2. Was the gunfire in issue 119 fired outside the ASZ composed by Eugene's Group or The Saviors? I'm guessing option two given the fact that if the shots did belong to Eugene and Co, the Saviors would be on them in seconds. Look at me answering my own questions!

Sorry if that wasn't clear. Rick saying "That's the signal" was supposed to indicate that someone was watching the area around Alexandria just in case Negan's forces arrived. They would fire a gun to signal that they'd been spotted.

3. Pointing out that Negan's WW2 Grenades would have sent shards of Shrapnel and Metal flying through anyone's within the blast radius, therefore, in issue 120, Rick and Co would be shown plucking the pieces from their skin if you knew about that... Go ahead, prove me wrong...

P.S, your the best

I believe you mean "you're." Maybe you got a little shrapnel in your fingers.

4. Where would Negan receive WW2 Grenades?

Probably a Christmas present. I think the Saviors have found and stored all kinds of crazy stuff since the fall of civilization.

5. Dwight's left handed. You know what that means.
Cough *cough* issue 126.

I actually have no clue what that means. Seriously. No clue. Robert?

Oh... on the cover to 126. Is that a spoiler?!

That's it guys! It's been fun and let me just point out the obvious... Your Comic Rocks! Looking forward to hearing more of Negans ridiculously awesome phrases...

See you later!
~Zack,
Saint Clair, MI

Well, let's hope he survives the war then!

Dudes, can you stop dicking us around with The Cutting Room Floor? It's like two-years past the original release date--make some time for it, man! Or else...
..Or else I won't be able to read it.
Fuck.

-Exasperated Fan on the Edge

When we finally get around to it, it'll be worth the wait.

True, but let's not dismiss this. I am dicking around everyone who wanted this book and I'm sorry about that. Working on the show and doing All Out War on the accelerated schedule and all the other various projects I do does take up a lot of time and it's making Cutting Room Floor take EVEN LONGER. BUT the good news is...

When we finally get around to it, it'll be worth the wait.

Dear Kirkman et al,

"My dick is so hard right now I could crack steel. I should wrap it in barbed wire and call it Lucille two"

Firstly, kudos to that line (and the rest of Negan's repertoire of vulgar one liners). Brilliant.

Secondly, a character named Lucille, a character which later appears named Lucille Two, a character missing his

hand, a large portion of the story taking place in a prison? Do I spy an Arrested Development fan? If so, I'm just looking forward to Negan using a stair-car to climb over Alexandria's walls, or for Carl's female cousin to come into the story, causing him to develop a weird crush on her. (I know you said Rick's brother wouldn't be appearing in the story, but you never said anything about his daughter!)

But that raises another question. Do you ever put any Easter eggs in your comics? You don't necessarily have to say what they are, because finding them is the fun part (or you can if you want), but a yes or no will be suffice.

Lovingly yours,

Adam
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I think it'd be a WHOLE lot easier to compare the plot of TWD with Arrested Development than that weird TOY STORY comparison that was making the rounds online a year ago.

All similarities are unintentional... I mean, the Lucille 2 thing was not meant as a reference, but I AM a huge fan of Arrested Development.

Hey there, loving the All Out War arc and it's damn fantastic, really enjoying it so far and where it's headed. I was re-reading it again and noticed in Issue 118 that Maggie still says her last name is Greene when denouncing Gregory. After marrying Glenn would she not have taken Rhee as her last name, especially in honor of his death? Just assumed she would have after what had happened.

Thanks and keep it up!

Brandon

First of all, Glenn never had a last name in the comic. On the show, he's Rhee. This is me trying to clarify things, but I feel like it's not...

As for her not taking Glenn's name, doesn't that happen all the time these days? Maggie is a good progressive woman, and there's not as much call for the patriarchal enslavement of womenfolk as Man's property in these times.

My thinking was that her entire family died... and she wants to carry on her family name. Never had time to put it into a scene, but changing her name would kill what's left of her family... in a sense. So she kept her last name.

When they got married... it's not like they changed their mailing address or got new driver's licenses or even had a marriage license... so it never really felt like something that deserved a scene.

Next issue... some REALLY cool stuff happens. (See? Doesn't that sound shitty? Let me try that again...)

Next issue: The Saviors try out their newly modified weapons.

-Sean Mackiewicz

I don't know, Sean... that sounds AWFULLY SPOILERY! Hey people... there are SPOILERS a couple lines up!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Sometimes you have to let a page speak for itself, and I think this issue clears up, at the very least, the issue of Dwight's loyalty... and to say where we go from here will be quite monumental...

Yeah... let's just leave it at that.

LETTERS!

Dear Kirkman...

You bastard! How could you kill off my favorite character; Heath's Leg? That leg was always running around gathering supplies to keep people alive but what now? Blown away! And his booty doctor chick got bitten! What is left for poor Heath? One good leg? Come on! When will this war end? It has gone too far!

I almost lost it with Rick's hand and then Carl's eye but this is too much.

Anyway, love the comic! Looking forward to another decade, at least!

Ben P
Grand Rapids

Eventually all the dismembered parts will assemble and form a brand new character. Cool, right?

That's been done in a comic before. Research your jokes, Mackiewicz.

You guys missed out big with those grenades and Lucille. how bad ass would that have been to bat one in and have it hit carl?

Zack

Lucille batting a grenade? Pretty cool (potentially dumb as well). At Carl? Not cool.

Not cool at all.

Kirkman, you're a fucking dick tease. A grenade goes off behind Carl and I think to myself, "Man, Kirkman is really putting it to this kid. Look at how close that grenade was to him. Look at the beautiful swan dive he's taking from the blast. He's got to be dead this time, right?" Nope, nope, and fucking NO! "I'm okay, dad. I'm okay.."? Are you fucking serious?! "It just knocked me down."? What the fuck?! I'd expect the kids back to be shredded by shrapnel, not to mention internal injuries from the blast wave itself. Man, that kid has more lives than a fucking cat... Wait a minute, you killed Shiva. Where was her extra lives, huh?

Any rate, keep up the great work. I can't wait to see how All Out War turns out, and I'm looking forward to how you're going to put Carl through the wringer next. He's one tough little fuck.

Craig Johnson
Webster City, IA

Wimp.

Yeah, Carl could have been seriously injured being that close to that grenade blast. He was lucky that time. He's been very unlucky in the past. Cut the kid some slack.

Dear Kirkman & crew,

What was the significance of Rick leaving the phone he used to communicate with dead Lori with behind?

Roberto Laboy
Alexandria, Virginia

The significance is that he left the phone he used to communicate with dead Lori behind.

He hasn't used it in a while, he put it away... but he never got rid of it. By leaving it behind, he's y'know... leaving that part of his life behind. But as revealed this issue... he plans on eventually going back to Alexandria. So maybe it was part of his plan all along. We'll see.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I love Jesus! And I love Jesus. I know he only got a few panels in issue #121, but I've been meaning to write to you about how much affection I have for the character for awhile. I know (it's been said, right?) that Walking Dead Jesus isn't supposed to have any symbolic connection to Bible Jesus, but I can't help but equate them in my mind. Walking Dead Jesus is a nice guy--he's open, he's honest, he's compassionate. But he also gets the job done, and very effectively at that. I think the Jesus from the Bible was like that in some ways--always concerned about people, about doing the right thing, but very down to earth and practical. You gotta have your head in the clouds and your feet firmly planted on the ground, you know? Walking Dead Jesus seems to be like that. And by "head in the clouds" in his case, I mean he's an idealist--and he's also a realist. He's optimistic but he's not fooling himself that things aren't dire. Just like Bible Jesus. Maybe I'm projecting onto Walking Dead Jesus because he has the same name as Bible Jesus, but even so, you don't have to stretch to make a few positive comparisons.

All that's to say that when I see Jesus in Walking Dead, even if it's for a few panels, he always gives me hope. Rick is weighed down by so many things, but Jesus is here and now, right by your side, ready to serve. And the thing is, even if he dies, it's okay because he made everything around him better by being there. Even if he dies horribly, I know he'll be okay, because he also knows that he's done his best to make everything around him better just by being there. Not a bad thing for any of us to strive for, really.

I'm realizing now that I've made this distinction between Bible Jesus and Walking Dead Jesus that you could say that Bible Jesus is also Walking Dead Jesus. Because he was resurrected. Get it?

Love,
Jason M. Poole

This isn't a great letter by any means, but I enjoyed its message. Also, doesn't everyone go to school with some kid who grows out his hair and everyone calls him Jesus? Skybound has a convention booth worker who used to look like Jesus except then he cut all his hair off and is more like Judas.

Where'd that guy go? I liked that guy. Does he just help out in San Diego? Seems like it's been a while since I saw booth Jesus. Also... I don't remember him cutting his hair. Damn it... did I see him with a

haircut and not recognize him? That would be embarrassing.

To my dearest Walking Dead Team,

Issue 121 was definitely Not a letdown (even with y'all leaving out the return of zombie Shiva...but one can't get everything one wants, now can they?)! Anywho, loved the story and especially the inks - Gaudiano...you rock. That splash page was uh-mazing, too! Fav moments included:

1. Carl calling Rick a wimp

Agreed!

2. Michonne volunteering to get the job done
- And
3. The very second to last panel when Negan leaves Eugene to weigh his options (seriously...this would be a tough choice for Eugene, don't you think)?

To conclude...congratulations on making this book my favorite to read every (other) Wednesday (I'mma die when it goes back to monthly).

Maybe we won't just so you keep living!

Your most dedicated dead-head,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

PS. Shiva LIVES!!!

No she doesn't!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

I am a dedicated reader of THE WALKING DEAD and I am loving "All Out War" but your hype about "the unthinkable" is such Hollywood B.S.

"Unthinkable" would have been Denise not turning and surviving a zombie bite, or Rick being killed and Maggie takes over the story line but having everyone moving to Hilltop is not only thinkable but obvious.

Kirkman you need to just stay focused on the story line and keep away from the hype. THE WALKING DEAD never disappoints but thinking that something truly "unthinkable" was going to happen was a BIG let down!!!

Best
Steve Rothman
Los Angeles, California

Steve, on the basis that you thought of those things, they are also not "unthinkable." See how hard that is?

I think losing Alexandria was pretty unthinkable. I think getting hit with a barrage of grenades was unthinkable. But I get what you're saying. We could have definitely pushed things more. Everyone could have died and the book could have followed Negan as he won that war and made the book about him... but that's not where I want to go.

Stay tuned... there are PLENTY of unthinkable moments ahead.

Greetings Mr. Kirkman,

I'm curious about the creative process involved in creating so many different characters in The Walking Dead. There are a lot of characters that are, more or less, in the background and we may eventually hear their name mentioned by a main character and sometimes we see these background characters gain more development as the story moves forward. Do you create bios and backstories for all of your characters before you introduce them? For instance, did you create bios for a bunch of Saviors characters and then think this character would fit in really well in this part of the story? I think it would be very interesting to learn a little bit about how these characters are created and how and when you decide to insert them into the story. I'm also curious about how you map out the story arcs? I've read somewhere that you have mapped out the story upwards of something near 200 or so issues. If so, do you use that map as a flexible layout and then change certain aspects of it when you realize that something just doesn't work or if you come up with something you think may work better? It would be really cool to see updated survivors guides with info for new and less common characters we don't really know anything about. I think it would give readers a deeper look into who the people are that don't really get a lot of page time in the series.

Thanks and keep up the good work,

Greg Taylor

Read all about Robert's writing process in THE WALKING DEAD: CUTTING ROOM FLOOR, coming...

Shut up, Sean.

There's not a 100% concrete set process, Greg. Any and all of what you proposed in your letter happens from time to time. I do have a rough outline for the next 200 issues or so, but I also come up with things on the fly and push storylines back to accommodate... all that time, that's how you get roughly 200 issues worth of story backlogged. As far as individual characters, there are a lot of notes and things listing different character traits, but for the most part that stuff just goes onto the page and is kept track of in my scattered brain. It's a mess!

Dear Kirkman & Co.

I wrote in a couple issues ago complaining about you wasting the tiger, throwing her away in a stupid short scene that really wasn't that cool. But after reading 121 I just want to say that while I'm still a little pissed about that I really am glad you turned Ezekiel, the great and obnoxious king of the kingdom, into a huge pussy. There are already a solid amount of badass characters in the book, with Carl getting better as he goes, that introducing another few for All Out War seemed a bit ridiculous. But fortunately he's just a giant pussy with combat performance anxiety. And that makes me feel better about it.

Calling him a pussy is a little ridiculous. He, like most of the others involved in this war, aren't properly trained soldiers. He's fought in several battles (not including answering the call to arms in #114), so he's not a complete pussy...and then got his ass whupped to such a terrifying degree the last go-around that he didn't want to get himself or any more men killed. If anything he's kind of a front runner I guess, riding Rick's coat tails? But his story's not over yet, as you saw last issue... and he's licking off shots this one, so stop calling him a pussy... you wimp.

What Sean said. He's, y'know... a layered individual with many traits. He was even a little badass this issue.

Also, I love Charlie's artwork, but there is no way a bunch of hand grenades would cause the kind of mass destruction to the town that's depicted in 121. It looks like Dresden after WWII. Just saying.

Roberto

You're wrong.

Hi there Robert & Co.

Can you please make us a big favor and finally kill off that lame excuse of a man Negan. I can not stand this guy since you've first brought him in. I can not make it out, should he be a tough guy or some insecure moron, who swears at any sentence he brings out of his filthy mouth just to gain some respect out of lowlifes that view swearing as cool. Should he be respected or feared just because he is a pathetic Governor ripoff. I really do not dig any of this Negan hype at all. I hope that Rick or Carl will kill him of very soon and that we can see some better new storyline soon cause all this war thing is taking way too long.

Dean

Can't please everybody...

I swear he has almost ZERO in common with the Governor. Male... leader of a community... I really just don't get the comparison.

See you in two weeks when... yeah... we get more into that arrow thing that's sticking out of Rick...

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be UNTHINKABLE!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Only two more issues left! But before you get to read another page... Skybound will be at Emerald City Comic Con this week—3/26-28th. Stop by the booth, come to our panel (special announcements!) and everyone with paid admission gets a free TWD #1 variant by Erik Larsen!

Dear TWD,

I am addicted to your comic book. I've read every issue and eagerly await the next one each month. That being said, the reveal that "Jesus" is gay felt like a cheap shot at Christianity.

I am a Christian and I hated the introduction of a character named "Jesus". I was relieved when it was revealed that it was only a nickname, but I still have an issue with it. But I kept on buying because i love the book, the characters, the story. But after reading #122 I am seriously considering no longer buying this book. I have no problem with homosexual characters in your comic book, but naming a character Jesus and then making him gay just feels like a jab at Christians and that's not cool.

Matt

Matt, we hear you. Let's just double back on this topic after this next letter...

Mr. Kirkman,

Thank you for Jesus's scene in Issue 122.

I started liking guys in 6th grade, but I didn't realize it until the succeeding summer. Sprawled across my living room one afternoon, engrossed in a "Friends" marathon, I watched as one character's long-mentioned drag queen father minced and pranced across a Las Vegas stage, ushering on a line of speedo-clad gogo boys. As the main character looked down in shame and disgust, I felt an unsettling twinge of recognition. That was me. I liked guys, and that was what my incipient adult life deserved, revulsion from everyone I knew.

Somewhere amongst your 70,000 monthly readers, there is a young boy who recognized himself for the first time today in Jesus and Alex. His first context for his questioning will be a badass, universally beloved character in an epic, universally beloved story. Because of your writing, he will get to circumvent many of the issues that consumed years of my life.

Thank you,

Paul Johnson
Woodbury, MN

First of all, thanks so much for your letter. When I realized that I'd gotten so far into Jesus's story, that he'd been in so many issues and I'd never addressed his sexuality, I saw it as an opportunity to address the fact that a character's sexuality shouldn't matter. Jesus is the character he is, he's cool, he's capable and he's a bad ass, and he just happens to be totally into dudes. Not ALL dudes, just like straight women aren't into ALL dudes... but he's totally into guys.

And that doesn't matter.

I'll continue to tell stories with Jesus, and he'll still be the same character he always was, and sometimes his sexuality will come up, and sometimes it won't. Just like Rick doesn't stand around talking about how much he likes women. Because it doesn't really matter.

To circle back to Matt, like Mackiewicz suggested....

Matt, Jesus is NOT Jesus from the Bible. He's got a beard and long hair, and so he looks like Jesus, and people gave him the nickname, but he's NOT Jesus. Revealing that the character is gay was in no way intended to be a jab at Christians.

Now, I know you mean well, and I'm trying to be as understanding as possible to your situation, but I just have to point out that being offended that a character who shares a name with Jesus is gay, really just kind of puts you on the wrong side of history. Plainly put, you are WRONG to take any offense to any character's sexuality. You just are. If

Jesus were a black character, and someone took offense to that, I'm willing to wager that you'd think that is absurd, but if we backed things up 50 years or so... I'm willing to bet that would have been an issue for someone... and that person would have been wrong, too.

You might respond and say, "I have no problem with homosexuals, I'd be equally offended if Jesus were smoking crack, or killing someone, or eating shellfish." Meaning, you wouldn't like to see a character called Jesus doing anything that would make you question his character... and that's the point I'm trying to make here. There is nothing wrong with liking dudes... it's not questionable behavior and it shouldn't be an issue. It shouldn't even register that it could be a "jab" because it should be a non-issue. It should be as offensive as having a dyslexic character nicknamed Jesus, or an ambidextrous character nicknamed Jesus, or an extremely tall character nicknamed Jesus.

I urge you to consider that and maybe try to be a little more accepting of the differences we all have.

Also, it's just a cool nickname.

Hi cap. Kirk and mean sean.

Have to ask you a cuple q's.

Ok. But these better be questions, and not statements with numbers in front of them...

1. I think you should not kill Negan. Just don't. We still need to learn more about that killer.

0/1

2. In the tv show Kirk, I will rip you're head off if you EVER touch Tara!!!
So don't.

0/2

3. WTF! Why'd you kill the tiger?! Buttholes!

Is this one? I'll give it to you...but I won't answer.

4. Will we see negan in season 4 or 5?

I don't know about that, but you'll see him next issue for sure!

5. You need a whitehouse storyline.

2/5. Weak.

Brofist,
Gavin
Seattle

PS, please put me in letter hacks, people need to read this stuff. It's things that people want to say but can't.

Listen, bro. This is NOT how you write a Letter Hack. It's just not.

Yeah, this thing will NEVER get printed.

Did anyone else hear Eminem shout out the walking dead in the song rap god?

Hosjes
Surrey, BC

Ever since that song came out, Robert started bleaching his hair and wearing white t-shirts.

This is actually the first time I'm hearing about this.

Gurh [insert zombie noises here]...

In addition to sending my appreciation of the walking dead, I have

a few questions for you guys.

Why Georgia? I'm a native South-Floridian, so naturally Georgia just irks me the wrong way because a crazy relative of mine lives near Atlanta and I hope she's the first one to go should there be a zombie outbreak in Georgia...

Anyways, I ask because I go to school in Gainesville (FL), and the scenery from the [earlier] comics/show is very similar to this area. I think it's also the key to my nightmares - yes I'm 20 years old and I get nightmares of the Zombie apocalypse. I think it's mostly because it feels so real. And so close to my current home. The Spanish moss, big trees, greenery, long two way roads into the country, ya know? It just feels real. So thanks for that. (I mean, it could also be my fault - binge watching the Walking Dead and reading all the comics in the span of three days...)

Can't wait for the next issue!

Squidknee

The show is filmed in Georgia so what you're seeing is real Georgia. The reason I picked Atlanta was fairly arbitrary. I set the opening scenes of the book in Harrison County, Kentucky because that's where I'm from. The idea was that the government would try to corral people in major cities. I was thinking that Atlanta would likely be the closest large major city that they would try to get people to. Sorry, Cincinnati.

This is just a letter of praise and probably won't be printed, but I'm really enjoying the art style the book has currently. I was skeptical when 115 released, I really didn't enjoy the change. But now it seems like Stefano has really gotten used to Charlie's art, and it looks great. Will his work be continuing after this arc? I noticed his name on the 127 cover, I would LOVE to see him go beyond ALL OUT WAR.

Everything's cooler in caps,
Blake

Hey, bro... even though this is praise, you damn sure wrote a better letter than Gavin, so you're getting this printed. And yes, Stefano is staying on past AOW. You're happy, he's happy, we're happy... Skybound doesn't fuck with things that work.

Very true.

Hey TWD,

First off love the comic since it started, and to a lesser extent the show (I was hoping after mid-season 4 finale that we wouldn't see Carol again till she showed up as leader of the Hunters). I just got done reading issue 122 and can't believe how blatantly obvious what Negan's fate at the conclusion of AOW will be. After rubbing Lucille all up on that walker, Negan is fucked the next time he rubs his dick on her!! I just hope one of the Saviors or one of his wives witnesses it so everyone will know what went down. Then you could sell Negan's zombified dick T-shirts. If you can sell those then you can do no wrong my friends. Thanks for the years of entertainment (and many more I hope)

Bond
Bodymore, Murdaland

Last issue folks were complaining about not getting the "unthinkable." THIS is as close to unthinkable as it gets.

Lots of questionable letter printing choices being made this month, Mackiewicz. What's up with that?

Lots of questionable fuckers keep writing in. Also, with this AOW schedule, #122 went on sale a week ago, so we have to pull from the enthusiastic horde who gets their letters in first, not the scholars who will miss the window because they hemmed over where to place a comma. Perfection will get you nowhere while butchers of the English language are running rampant!

Dear Captain Kirk and Sean the sheep.

Sean you said in letter hacks (issue 122) that you don't spoil upcoming stuff in the walking dead. (My ass) Yet before you spoiled something from the Walking dead tv show. Now I'm not the one to get super angry over a spoiler..... But seriously come on, you don't have to be a hypocrite, you're like spoiling stuff from the tv show as well. (which I know not everyone watches. which they should, but still just no, just no) in the letter hacks and right after that some guy goes on to talk about the little hint for the next issue that you "spoiled" but you go onto say that you'd never spoil something when you just did in your guy's intros. It's not the spoiler that frustrates me but the hypocrisy. All in all, I just wanted to express my thoughts, and no hard feelings. Thanks, bye.

Some dumbass in Canada

Bro, nowhere in my response do I say I'd never spoil anything. We just have no incentive to do it. Unless it's for the TV show, and characters that have been widely reported on for over four months are FINALLY showing up. But since you all read the comic, you all know they'll show up eventually, right? So is that really even a spoiler? I don't know. I don't think so. Let's just never speak of spoilers again.

You just said you'll never speak of spoilers again in this letters column! You've spoiled the letters column, Sean! Now I know you'll never mention a spoiler again, so I sort of have a vague idea as to what your response will entail! I HATE SPOILERS!!

Dear TWD team,

Thank you for creating the best comic series I have ever read. I got into this around a year ago and absolutely love it! I just picked up issue 122 this morning and love it! Though I am scared for 123...

I had a few questions.

1. What gave you the inspiration to do the iron burn on Dwight's face?
- I don't really know, exactly. Maybe THE SHIELD, which has a couple characters get their faces scarred on a stovetop. That was pretty gruesome.*
2. Is there any chance of any novel or comic character even being referred to in this book?

For whatever reason, I really hate pop culture references in stories. I LOVE Tarantino movies and yet I don't like it in my own work. I think it dates things too much. This book is now over ten years old. There could have been mentions to all kinds of fads and things that are over. Even a Harry Potter mention could be seen as somewhat dated now. So I always try to avoid that stuff. So... probably not.

3. Awesome how you are giving Rick a new hand. I am trying to picture what kind it will be. A Merle Dixon hand? Darth Vader hand? Or maybe a machine gun for a hand? That would be fun, right? Or just kill him.

Good idea!

4. Which has been the most fun character for you to write for All Out War?

Jesus... or really, Negan. It's always Negan.

5. When are you going to kill Rick? I want him dead already.

Charley Pope
Texas

Eventually. Be patient... or maybe you won't have to be.

Dear Kirkman & That Other Guy.

Just two questions. I hope you have time and space to answer them.

I'm really glad this numbering things works—most of the time. It helps me select letters that much easier...

- 1.) So... what's your plan with Sophia? She's been around since the beginning, and I find her to be one of the most underdeveloped characters in the story. She's never seen, and never has any interesting to say. She still acts like a little child, stuck in a fantasy world. It's strange how Carl can change so much, but not Sophia.

You know, with Clementine becoming so popular and all, isn't it time for Sophia to shine a bit?

She has been underdeveloped. She's always been a much more introverted kid... but I'd definitely say she's a character to watch moving forward. Assuming all the characters don't die...

- 2.) What was the deal with Olivia? She had a cold expression on her face after talking to Rosita. And most importantly... WHO IS SHE SLEEPING WITH?!

... I bet it's Gregory.

We'll find out eventually.

Also, I will now guess who will be dead at the end of this arc.

Maggie, Michonne, Rosita, Gabriel, Nicholas & Family, Jesus, Gregory, Kal, Eduardo, Negan, Carson and Dwight.

So that leaves alive:

Rick, Carl, Andrea, Sophia, Eugene, Aaron, Heath, Olivia, Harlan, Brianna, Earl, Sherry and Ezekiel.

I bet I'm dead wrong, but whatever.

Thank you for the series!
Axel (you follow me?)

In two weeks...you'll be that much closer to knowing how it all ends. And hey, I'm serious: check out ECCC. ... it's my favorite show of the year! And all sorts of cool Skybound creators will be there: Ryan Ottley, Paul Azaceta, Josh Williamson, Matteo Scalera and people who are equally important that I'm forgetting!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Sadly, I won't be there--but it IS an awesome show! Promise!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Where does ALL OUT WAR go from here? Find out next issue! But now let's dive right into your reactions to Rick taking an arrow. Some of you weren't fooled, some of you were, and some of you are just acting straight up foolish.

They're called BOLTS, Sean. SHEESH.

You bastards! Whyyyyyy???? Why, Kirkman? Why??? Why. God damn it. Dwight! That mother fucker. Ugh. UGH. I hope that idiot gets his head caved in worse than Negan. Kirkman. Why. Why are you killing off Rick. Why. I love this comic so much.

Tony

We love that you love this comic so much. It'll be ok.

Breathe, Tony. Breathe.

Mr kirkman & co.

I'm left stunned at the end of #123. Rick had already lost his wife, baby, hand, and his son's eyeball. Can we give this guy a break? No. Let's have a zombie-infected arrow piece his back and protrude out the front. I'm just flabbergasted. And Dwight is definitely playing both sides. He needs to die. I can't wait to get the next issue.

victor

Give Rick a break? Preposterous!

Dear walking dead team,

Praise praise praise you guys rock blah blah blah so all out war has me checking my calendar every other day just to count down the days to it but I have a few problems with Dwight. This war could of been over SO long ago in issue 117 when Negan takes a group out to take care of the walkers on his yard drawn by Rick, why didn't Dwight just friendly fire his ass right there? One little slip up with Dwight's aiming and he "accidentally" hits Negan's knee and he's walker food. And then in #123 Not sure if it was just Dwight and Negan but why didn't Dwight just kill Negan there or "choke" and "accidentally" miss his shot at Rick. Other than that great work

Owen,
New Egypt, NJ

This is the same argument Eugene made several issues ago... that Dwight is too concerned with playing both sides, instead of nutting up and taking Negan out. But we'll have definitive answers on what Dwight's angle is soon enough.

Indeed. It's entirely possible he wasn't sure what the outcome of this war would be... and so he's hedging his bets.

To he who cannot admit fault,

First, way to kill off the main character and draw of your story. I guess all the hype has really made you arrogant. Do you really think everyone is going to be okay with you killing Rick? I will not be reading anymore. Rick is The Walking Dead. Ive bought and enjoyed the entire run up to this point but now I wish I had not spent all that damn money on your bullshit. Its about 300.00 of my hard earned dollars I wasted on you. I wonder what could make you think killing Rick in favor of Negan would work. I guess you're a proponent of bullying as Negan is a bully. Well hey its your book that you apparently think can do no wrong so enjoy less and less people reading.

I find the tone of your email rather bullying, and you definitely resort to name calling by the end... which is not nice. Also, let's not conflate how "everyone" feels about

this turn of events with how you're feeling. But hey! We're hoping that if you are still in fact reading TWD, this issue is some medicine to make you feel less ornery.

I just want to pop in and state for the record that if you have purchased every issue of TWD and feel your money has been wasted, I will GLADLY buy the entire run at cover price. Seriously. I've only got about ten copies of issue one left, I need to restock.

As for the grenades; they DO NOT cause houses to catch fire or cause the destruction depicted in your book. Now you can say Im wrong but I served 6 years in the military. Most of it with a USMC infantry platoon. We threw ALOT of grenades and none ever caused the raging inferno you say they cause. This includes throwing them in houses. All that happens is a rather loud report and alot of dust and debris thrown up. They are a fragmentation weapon, meaning they cause injury or death from flying metal fragments, not an incendiary weapon that causes fires. You can deny being wrong in the face of the truth and honestly that would be right up your alley. Congrats on forcing readers away.

But wait wait wait... what if someone JUST farted in the house? Wouldn't THAT cause an explosion of that caliber? It would, right? Grenades + Farts = Explosions. Hilarity ensues.

Be nice, Sean.

We don't talk about farts half as much as I'd like. Sorry.

As an aside your comments about Marvel also played a role in my discontinued reading. You make vague comments about them ruining the industry but dont specify how. I wonder if you tell Rick Remender, John Hickman, or Matt Fraction about how working for such an evil company is detrimental to the future of comic books or if you just prefer to bash Marvel in public? I'm sure those three would disagree as they seem to be able to balance work for pay (Marvel) and creator owned stuff. Its no ones fault but your own that you last run there was some of the worst stuff ever published. Really fuck you fat ass enjoy what ever remains of your 15 minutes. It wont be long if the direction your taking the book is any indication.

Adam Hurst

This really is a top notch letter, Adam. Thanks for writing in, and I do hope that once you see that Rick is actually alive and not dead... you considering picking the series back up.

Sorry about the grenade thing. I could blame the whole thing on operational gas lines that are in working order in Alexandria but at the end of the day, I honestly just said "grenades" in the script and Charlie just chose to draw the grenades he was most familiar with. I should have taken the time to research the specific grenade that did what I wanted them to do and made sure Charlie drew that one. That's my fault. I screwed that up. Sorry about that. I'll definitely try harder next time.

When writers do things like this, it honestly isn't a matter of being lazy or rushed (well, maybe in some cases it is), it can sometimes be as simple as thinking you know how something works, and just being wrong. I honestly just had a mistaken sense of what general "grenades" do. They don't... create fiery explosions? Damn. What the hell was I thinking?

I'm not the smartest guy in the world. I'm average at best. And fat, you got that part right, too. I'm really a mess. But I do research things all the time, especially when I'm writing about something I knew very little about. For some reason, I was a little more confident than I should have been.

Oh, Marvel. Yeah... as a joke recently I said, "I have no issue with Marvel, aside from the fact that I feel they're

a poorly run company that is destroying this industry with its short-sighted policies.” I’m paraphrasing... I don’t do research for letters columns.

To clarify, for the record, and for fun, what I was talking about are the many things they do that are good for “now” but don’t lead to long-term sales, or building a readership. Chief among these policies are the semi-recent price hike to \$3.99 on the majority of their titles. Since that happened, sales on Marvel titles are consistently down. People buying less of any comic is not good for comics... and it’s short-sighted.

They’re now relaunching their titles over and over again to diminishing returns... and yeah, as an industry insider, I see their policies as destructive to their future and the future of the industry as a whole.

Thankfully Image Comics is growing at an extremely rapid rate and seems to be picking up their slack. In that respect, I say please continue, Marvel.

All that said, I really enjoy HAWKEYE and some of their other books. They still have cool characters. I’m rooting for them. If I’m critical, it’s just because I care.

What were we talking about again?

There’s one reason why by the time this letter has an opportunity to be published we will know Rick is totally okay - you don’t follow some guy around for 10 years just to have him killed by some “mucked up” arrow, er, I mean bolt.

Nicely done, Kirkman.
Sean

I admire your coolheadedness in the face of such severe comic book-related distress. Nicely done, Sean.

Letter Hacks,

I’m not convinced that Dwight showed his true colours at the end of #123. I think he’ll do a Vader and - with his last ounce of strength - end up throwing Negan down a big hole on a viewing platform in a now fully operational Death Star, before succumbing to some previously-inflicted Lucille injuries.

I like Dwight. Up to this point he’s been a bit of a closed book, and those characters that make us second guess their motivations (as I’m still doing now) are the most interesting to read.

Absolutely. And while we’re talking about Dwight, he’s also getting an action figure this June—along with a new version of Rick, Andrea and a Punk Rock Zombie. And they seriously all look amazing.

And characters who are just plain badass. Like Jesus. He’s a badass. Remember when he caught that grenade and threw it back at the guy who’d thrown it first...? He’d take Daryl Dixon down in a fight any day!

Oh, no question.

Looking forward to seeing Jesus pull the bolt out of Rick’s back and throw it threw some guys eye next issue.

John Turner
Liverpool, UK

Where was this letter a few months ago when I was writing this comic! Missed opportunity!

Hi all love reading TWD

Just a thought, if a pregnant character had a still born baby inside her would it turn into a gross undead thing trying to get out? would it have to be c sectioned out and killed? Reminds of the baby scene in the dawn of the dead remake which was nowhere near as good as the original.

Keep up the good work

Jon.c,
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Theoretically, if an unborn baby died, since everyone is already infected, it would turn into a zombie. But the depends on whatever it is we’re infected with being able to get to the baby. Is it passed through the mother? Or would the womb protect it? Without revealing exactly what it is that caused the zombie plague... that’s a tough one to answer.

Was wondering if you got ricks last name (grimes) from night of the living dead? The doctor the news announcer speaks to on tv his last name is grimes. I was just wondering. Its my favorite romero dead fick. Keep the dead coming. Love the comic.

Greg

GRIMES was actually taken from a friend of mine in grade school. First grade, actually. I always thought it was a cool last name.

I was kind of always hoping you’d taken it from Frank Grimes.

Hello all,

I just want to say, you nearly made me go in tears in issue 123. No, not because Rick was shot with a “infected” arrow, but that once again, another Asian dies.

Kirkman, do you have a problem against Asians?

Well, DO YA?!?!?! First Glenn, then Kal... who’s NEXT?!?! Maggie’s unborn child???? Some other Asian we will see in the upcoming A NEW BEGINNING story arc? Huh?! But in the end, don’t kill off Shiva... *COUGH COUGH* Issue 118 *COUGH COUGH* (Nah, just kidding.)

Please, keep writing and making TWD with your friends Charlie, Sean, Rus, Cliff, and new ink team bro, STEFANO!!

Andy Gasal
Montpelier, Vermont

I’ve killed significantly more white characters than any other race. I hear you, though. It’s important to me that this book represents a realistic cross-section of people. I’m always trying to work in more minority characters.

Calling All Walkers, aka Kirkman and friends,

As I was growing up I thought only nerds read comic books... Guess what I’m 25 and I read The Walking Dead and a few others comic books and just as a word of happiness, when I found out now Jesus is gay along with Aaron and the late Eric, I am glad the diversity reaches towards everyone, gay and straight. And I also shows that gay love is real love, as a gay man to see this written in now even comic books makes me proud thank you!

About issue 127s cover that you posted online, everyone sees it as either Lily Caul or one of Negan’s wives, maybe even Dwight’s... I’m curious if you can quite possibly answer me this, is there a possible separation? Like could The Walking Dead be starting fresh and we are going to have a new secession of survivors, having Carl and Ricks story coming to an end?

All good questions to ask.

No comment. Read 127.

Every great story needs an end, you see, Breaking Bad did, and it needed to. I want TWD to end with a bang! And on a high note, but not to just do away with the story but other survivors taking the lead! Because where are they even going to get the story lines from in this new spin off, which AMC already announced they are starting?

For the TV spinoff, I’m coming up with that stuff. It’s unrelated to the comics. What’s happening in issue 127 is in no way connected to the spin-off TV show.

I’m a big fan! Keep up the writing, because I always need something to keep me questioning, or life would be boring!

Sincerely Cameron Allen
Brooklyn, NY

Thanks for writing!

Just wondering if after all out war is over...will the covers go back to normal? i love the traditional covers, and not too big of a fan of the all out war covers. love all things walking dead! thanks.

sincerely,
a true dead head
ramiro perez, salida, ca

By the time you read this issue, at least two post-AOW covers will have been released and you’ll see that, yes, the covers are going back to the way they were. As for the story inside? Well, there’s no going back on what happens there...

Oh, nice tease, Sean. Bravo.

In two weeks we deliver the grand finale. After 22 pages, nothing will be the same. Talk then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Ooooooh... I’m excited!! See you then, readers!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

In celebration of the end of ALL OUT WAR—and Rick and co.'s victory—we're taking this bag to the limit. Robert doesn't know that we're doing this UNTIL THIS MOMENT, but now he's locked in and seeing if we can make this the biggest hack yet—and also celebrate us not having to do this twice a month.

First of all, you've been a crybaby about this accelerated schedule... sure, Charlie and I are complaining... I'm sure Cliff's been complaining... maybe even Stefano. I doubt Rus is complaining... I think he gets cold if he's not lettering three books a day. But you're an editor... is it really that hard? Shame on you!

And good job. Seriously, we wouldn't have been able to pull this off without you, Sean. You kept the trains running on time and this experiment went way smoother than I thought it would. I really thought we'd be limping across the finish line by the end of this, but as I sit here typing this... the DOUBLE-SIZED issue 127 (oh, boy, it's going to be a huge issue, folks) is DONE, and Charlie and I are already deep into issue 128. We'll be working on issue 129 by the time this issue sees print.

Which brings me to the real all-star of this arc... Charlie Adlard, ladies and gentlemen. Holy crap, how did you pull this off? The art in this volume is some of the densest, most lushly illustrated art this series has seen and you've done it in record time. Bravo, sir! Let's do it again sometime. Did I say that? I promise we're never going to do this again! Well... not any time soon!

It looks like mixed messages will be the theme of this Hacks.

Stefano! I'm sure it was a little difficult to come onto a team that had been working like a well-oiled machine for a hundred years or however long it's been. I'll be damned if you didn't just jump right in and kick a whole bunch of ass. I'm so happy that you're staying on the book after this arc, this book has been looking great!

And part of this is because of Cliff Rathburn's amazing tones. Stefano is not spotting blacks as heavily as Charlie would in his inks, so there's been a lot more open space to tone and Cliff has been handling it masterfully.

I joke about how fast Rus is (mainly because he letters almost every Image Comic at this point), but it shouldn't go unnoticed how much fantastic work you do and the fact that you hold it all together while still doing some of the BEST lettering in the business is simply amazing. Bravo.

Sean... you suck.

LETTERS! (and oh, my god this file is long... good thing I didn't save it for that absolute last minute!)

Mr. Kirkman,

I'm a 41-year school psychologist and parent of two. And as much as I want to think that I'm a professional and mature adult, I have truly become a kid again reading TWD Comics. The funny thing is...I've NEVER read a comic book in my life before this series! Nada one growing up as a kid. So, thank you for opening my eyes to the world of graphic novels. Reading about these amazing characters you've created is like a graduate psychology class within itself. Looking forward to the next issue. Death to Negan...clinically speaking of course!

Mike Markowitz

Dublin, Ohio

Kicking it off with some positivity! Let's naturally see where it goes from there!

Mr. Kirkman,

I am the Christian that wrote in about the Jesus scene in #122.

Thank you for your reply to my letter. It is the first time that a letter I have written to a comic was ever printed in the back, so that was kind of cool. On the other hand, I've never been told that I am on the "wrong side of history" before. From your response, it is obvious that you completely disagree with the Christian faith. I understand that Jesus in the Walking Dead is not the same Jesus that is in the Bible. I never claimed that he was. I do, however, believe that Jesus is a Holy Name and should be treated as such. I am not "offended" by homosexuals or by homosexuality as you suggested that I am in your response; I merely have a Biblical viewpoint of homosexuality (which is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Because the Bible has been translated and reinterpreted countless times, does it necessarily say what you think it does? I know the judgment calls we've made in our Spanish language trades, I can't imagine the margin of error in the Bible. The New Testament was originally written in Greek! You know that saying, "It's all Greek to me"? It's about the SAME LANGUAGE! Take a look at how those verses approximately read in its original language and tell me you think it says exactly what you think it does:

η ουκ οιδατε οτι αδικοι βασιλειαν θεου ου κληρονομησουσιν μη πλανασθε ουτε πορνοι ουτε ειδωλολατραι ουτε μοιχοι ουτε μαλακοι ουτε αρσενοκοιται

ουτε κλεπται ουτε πλεονεκται ουτε μεθυσοι ου λοιδοροι ουχ αρπαγες βασιλειαν θεου ου κληρονομησουσιν

ALSO, and I don't mean to really make more of a stand on this, but there's an awful lot of things the Bible condemns; eating shellfish and working on a Sunday among them. So you shouldn't really pick and choose. Basically you should be equally offended if a character called Jesus works on a Sunday... and I'd wager you're not, so that is a sign of intolerance toward people you don't agree or identify with. That's all.

I completely expected you to disagree with me, most people are all about people expressing their beliefs as long as they are not Christian beliefs, so I was not surprised by your response. Maybe I was wrong to suggest that TWD's Jesus' sexuality was a jab at Christianity because it is such a "non-issue" for you as the writer, but not considering that a gay character named Jesus would be offensive to the Christian Community says a lot about your respect of Christians.

You have created a very unique and interesting universe with The Walking Dead and it appeals to many people (a ton of people at my church love the show). I look forward to the next issue every time I go to the comic shop. I really enjoyed this issue, too, and I will continue to buy the book for now because I love it so much and I want to see where it goes, but I only ask that you treat your readers with respect. In a world where everyone gets offended at everything, remember the Christians that read your comic and watch your show. I'm not asking you to agree with my beliefs because I certainly do not agree with yours, but if you are asking your readers to show tolerance and be open-minded, I am asking that you be tolerant of our beliefs as well.

Thank you,
Matt

Thank you for writing in, and I do apologize if I offended you in any way. I sincerely appreciate you continuing to read the book and I'm glad you still enjoy it. Maybe "the wrong side of history" remark was a bit harsh, but I do think that we have two distinct opposing views on this, and the population of the country is moving toward one side or the other... and history will judge which one of us is correct.

So let's just table this and check back in during the next decade or so? Deal? Let's meet back here at issue 250. Cool?

hey there Kirky wirky and Sean... um... Sean,

First off, just wanted to say thank for all the great work you guys do. I first got into the book shortly before the TV show came to

air (little late, I know... always heard good things)... I devoured every issue up to that point (60+?) in less than 3 days and haven't turned back since. All Out War has been a pretty intense story but I'm ready for it to end. I'm excited to see where the book goes afterwards and am ready to move on. As an aside, in this issues Letter Hacks it was suggested taking a trip to the White House. You shot it down! We're supposed to be right outside DC, right? Take a damn trip to DC! Hell, they could look for some super-fortified buildings... maybe see the first semblance of organized government as they (government) turn back anyone trying to get in the city or certain monuments. Or even come on over my way to Baltimore. Could be some really new paths to take we haven't seen in this world so far.

We've been to DC. It's been largely overrun by walkers and looted for supply runs, but I don't think we need to return there anytime soon. And if you want to extrapolate that to mean that symbolically Washington is a place best left in the past... that, too. Besides, it looks like Rick's got bigger ideas.

Speaking of Letter Hacks, though, comes to the main point I wanted to write in. The first two letters, by Paul Johnson and "Matt." I want to congratulate both guys for taking the guts to write in to the book and Skybound for publishing the letters to open this dialogue. Just a few points I wanted to touch on here.

Matt: I grew up in a largely Latino area close to the US/Mexico border. I had a good friend growing up who came out in high school; his name is Jesus (Hey-Zeus, thank you Die Hard 3!). While not pronounced the same, it is spelled the same. Do you take offense to this? To see in writing, about my friend, "Jesus is gay," would that offend you? Please don't mistake this as me coming down on you for your beliefs, that is not my intent. The Walking Dead's Jesus is a fictional character whom is not presented in any manner or sort as being the same Jesus of the Bible. I think this is very much making a mountain out of a molehill.

And let's all remember that we've all been playing a game of Bible translation telephone for millennia now, and that we have arrived at Jesus via Greek AND Hebrew. Which is not to say that it's a false name, but a name that can and has stood for many things... (and THIS is where Prof. Schiffman's History of Ancient Israel lecture finally paid off!)

Kirkman: Did I mention I love you, man? I do... I love THE WALKING DEAD, THIEF OF THIEVES and I'm starting to read INVINCIBLE. However, for you to tell Matt he's wrong for being offended... well, that's just flat out incorrect. This is America, baby... Land of the Free! One of those things our forefather's fought for us all was freedom of religion. Matt very much has his beliefs and he abides by them, so it seems. Assuming Matt approaches homosexuality from a standpoint presented to him by his beliefs, that he holds the Lord's name as being sacred and, as such, something that no man should take in vain, then I say Matt has EVERY right to be offended. You telling him he is wrong for being offended is, well, wrong. Now, what SHOULD, and seemingly has, come of this is Matt's comment opening up a discussion and all viewpoints can be heard. Just because we may not agree with someone doesn't make us right and them wrong... and most times, it isn't even a matter of right or wrong, but a matter of "I understand why you feel that way. I respect your thoughts despite not being in agreement with you."

Well said.

So, just as much as I hope Matt can realize his offense is misplaced, I hope Mr. Kirkman can realize Matt's letter wasn't decrying homosexuality as wrong, but rather questioning if TWD Jesus was made gay as a swipe at Christians.

Thanks for the time and, again, thank you for printing those letters. It would have been incredibly easy to just ignore them and not print them.

Mark Foster
Baltimore, MD

I'd like to think that most everything we discuss in Letter Hacks is subject to well reasoned debate. Except fans of Daryl. There's no telling those folks NOTHING.

I'm willing to admit that I maybe jumped the gun a little bit by lumping Matt's offense to the storyline to being a stance against homosexuality entirely. I do respect people's religious beliefs whether or not I entirely agree with them.

Letter Hacks,

By shooting Rick with an uncontaminated bolt Dwight has in fact saved his life! He's given Negan the impression that he's killed Rick and maintained his cover, while at the same time he's allowed Rick to come away relatively unscathed so he can regroup! Genius!

Which is why Dwight now holds Lucille. It's like that guy in a Royal Rumble that just hangs back and hangs back, and then BOOOM... sends one of the toughest competitors over the top rope. I'd cite an example, but come on, that happens in like every fucking Royal Rumble and it's still great.

I have to find out you're a wrestling fan here... like this... in front of everyone? Damn, Sean... what a let down... wait... I mean... I'm respectful of all religious beliefs... including professional wrestling.

I'm a fan strictly of the Royal Rumble. At this point, who isn't?

Dwight and Jesus are two of the best characters at the moment, I hope they stick around for a while when All Out War is done.

John Turner
Liverpool, UK

We'll just have to see. There's no telling where we're going for issue 127 and beyond! Stay tuned!

Dear Kirkman,

Alright. So I know from what I've heard you say in the past that the Walkers are called Walkers because Romero movies like "Night of the Living Dead" n' such don't exist in this universe, therefore no one knows to call them zombies. I assumed when I heard this that maybe just cool things didnt exist in these people's pop culture, making their lives more horrific than it needed to be BEFORE the outbreak even happened.

So, to the point! issue 123 comes around, and here's Andrea using the term "Turned up to Eleven." This implies, clearly, that the movie "This is Spinal Tap" did in fact exist to bring this phrase into their lives. Which is awesome, and I give you much respect for it.

However, if thats not the case, and Andrea is just using the term willy nilly without any precedent set by Spinal Tap, well then thats just damn dissapointing. Cause thats pretty messed up of you to create a world without Spinal Tap during your world-building process.

You sick bastard.

I don't even know who the fuck you are,

Nick G.
Denver, Colorado

#125 has a moment like that as well with Jesus, which I'm sure we'll hear about. So if "Night of the Living Dead" doesn't exist, is that because George Romero doesn't exist? Is TWD basically an alt-universe where Romero wasn't alive (or say, ambitious) and thus couldn't shackle negative zombie vibes—almost like an Evil Dead-type presence—to celluloid and thus they emerged into the real world? And that we keep making zombie films in the real world because it leaches their power and makes them less likely to appear. And that lasting power of TWD basically will ward them off for a very long time to come, and none of you have to worry about an upcoming zombie apocalypse, and more about earthquakes, which are very fucking real.

I ran this theory by coworker Brian and he said that it's more likely that Romero is still alive in TWD, except he didn't get into zombie films... he got into zombie research.

I am very cruel to these characters, but I would never make anyone exist in a world without THIS IS SPINAL TAP.

Dear Kirkman & Crew,

You're making it very hard for me to decide what the best series in the franchise is. The TV Show has so far been handling a lot of the Comic material better, and with having all the characters scatter, have created a bunch of new and interesting story lines.

That's pretty cool, but then the comics have All Out War with Negan, which has been insane so far. I don't actually believe that the bolt Dwight fired into Rick had zombie guts on it, but still, it's been completely unpredictable, fantastically written, and features one of my favorite villains in the franchise so far.

And then Telltale comes out with this new story line with Carver, who has the making of a better villain than Negan, and of course Telltale has instantly won my favor by having possibly my favorite character in the franchise return. Also, Season Two has just been overall amazing so far.

I simply can't decide which one is my favorite.

So my question is this, do you ever feel that you are "competing" with the TV or Telltale writers? I know that there are a good number of people who would consider Telltale the best series (myself included), and then there as those who say that the comics are the best and none of the adaptations have done better. Funnily enough, I don't meet many people who'd praise the TV Show over the comics or Telltale's, but they've been pretty fantastic too. Among all of these fans saying which series is their favorite, do you ever feel like you're competing with people at AMC or Telltale, trying to do better than they have? And if there is any kind of competition between the people who make the different series, do you feel like it's productive?

Well, first I have to say I think this is the EXACT RIGHT position to be in as the steward of The Walking Dead in all media. Having people argue about which one is THE BEST while agreeing they're all good... is kind of awesome (and have you read the novels? You should check those out). It doesn't bother me at all that Telltale gets so much praise, they deserve it. The Walking Dead comic is the FIRST thing, but it doesn't have to be the best. In a sense, I'm the canary in the coal mine... and everyone gets to look at what I write here and allow it to inform what they do... so frankly... everything that comes after the comic SHOULD be better, damn it.

And don't forget, I'm one of the many writers on the TV show... so I'm kind of competing with myself there.

Also, a question just about the comics, do you think that the group (I won't say Rick as, well, he may be dead), will ever have a conflict with another group where it's just a clashing of ideas, and neither one is necessarily wrong? A "villain" who isn't really a villain at all, a "non-villain". Or, in an even more extreme situation, do you think there will ever be a point where another group would be justified in viewing the main group as the villains? It would certainly be interesting to have that situation appear several years or so down the line after this savior business is all sorted.

You have a guy missing a hand, a kid missing an eye... this group looks like a train wreck at times. ABSOLUTELY they could be seen as villains... and Negan makes his own point at that in #125.

Yeah!

Well, now that that is all done(though I remember you saying that numbered questions is the way to get into the letter hacks, maybe I should go back and do that?), I'll finish with some praise for the current arc. I feel like All Out War has in some way given the series more life(especially with Gaudio inking it, that guy is incredible), I love all the new characters, and I can't wait to see what happens next (I'm convinced that Rick won't die.... YET).

Lucas A

You were right!

Is it ever going to snow or rain again? I feel as if it would be more dramatic a character getting mauled in the rain by a roamer. And it hasn't snowed in forever and it should snow all the time where they live. Move them somewhere always sunny and never rains? :) Vegas baby!

Thanks for the suspense and the hype!

Eternal fan,

Drew Schroeder
Las Vegas, NV

I feel like it once snowed for 25 straight issues. No more snow!

Well, they're even FURTHER north now... so the snow would be even more realistic. It does snow in DC... so we'll see. It should rain more often... that's for sure. That's mostly just an oversight on my part. Sorry.

Eli Roth really WOULD be the best Negan, don't pass that up when the time comes, motherfucker. With all due respect, that is.

(I don't know if I'm talking to Eli here or some member of TWD team, who the fuck cares)

Well, you are definitely not talking to Eli Roth here. This is not his letters page or his comic book. But he already knocked that Bear Jew baseball bat stuff out the park, right? Seems like a natural for Negan.

Anyway, I don't know how in the shit you're gonna pull off Negan on AMC.. I see problems...

Triforce

Bah! It'll be great.

Hey, Robert and co.

I know you've flat out said that the Dixon brothers will never be in the books (I wholeheartedly like that decision), but has Charlie ever drawn them? If the answer is yes, then for the love of Shiva the Tiger, show us!

Kenny from California

Not to my knowledge, no.

Maybe in a con sketch I haven't seen... but yeah, I don't think so either.

Dear Kirkman and friends

i just read 124 and the letter hacks in that issue were fucking ridiculous ive sent in several letters and im not even gunna punctuate this time because apparently there is no standard for these letters at all so i love the comic with a burning passion and there are a few things i want to know

I used to proof your letters, but goddamn that was a waste of time, and honestly... I felt like it made you all look better than you deserved. So now everyone's letters are presented exactly as they're sent, the English language be damned.

1. everyone wont shut the fuck up about shiva and its annoying fuck the tiger its dead. that being said can u please clarify whether animals can be infected and reanimated or not because alot of people think so and im almost positive that youre going

to eventually reveal the cure for the zombie plague lies with the animals ezeial and michonne allude to that fact in issue 117

They do? I think you may be misreading things. There are no zombie animals in this world. They can't be infected.

2. Did you notice that you chose to make both community recruiters gay i dont think that was your intention given that you explained how you wanted to show how sexuality is meaningless especially in this world but i couldnt help but see that both aaron and jesus are both gay and had the same exact job

Yeah... that certainly wasn't intended.

i cant wait to see what happens next and i hope everyone shuts their stupid fucking faces over that stupid tiger it was cool while it lasted get over it

Keep up the good work (but make better choices for letter hacks)

Tyler Spinoso

Dear TWD,

I'm a huge fan of the comic books and the show, but the comic book is definitely more interesting. Anyways, I just finished comic #124, and I LOVED it. Really glad to see Eugene becoming the badass he needs to be. I eagerly wait for the next comic to come out, and I am going to hate going back to monthly releases, though I am excited to read #127. I would like to ask a few questions though (and they will be questions).

1.) Is there any chance that you'll go back to biweekly releases sometime in the near future?

At the right time? Sure. And then I will quit.

Oh, you will not... RIGHT?

2.) Is there any chance that Rick is actually going to survive AOL? Things are looking pretty bad right now, and I'd like to see him make it through.

You're talking to an AOL survivor—it can be done. I also survived Prodigy. (See what happens when I don't proof these?)

3.) Did you have to kill Kal so easily? Not going to bitch too much about it, but I would have liked to see a Savior-kabob with his spear.

Yeah... I really should have shown someone getting hit with one of those... damn. Eventually, for sure. There's an amazing scene in THE PROPOSITION where a guy gets speared... it's insane... I mean, if you're just dying to see something like that. It's a good movie.

4.) Can you keep Michonne and Jesus safe? By far the two greatest characters in TWD.

Not much drama in keeping the best characters safe...

Indeed...

5.) Is any safe haven going to be safe after AOW? Seems like Negan is pretty good at fucking those up...

Not much drama in keeping safe havens safe either...

Also indeed.

6.) Way back, was Father Gabriel giving over survivors to The Hunters in order to secure his own safety?

No. That would have come up by now if he was. I feel like they tracked Rick's group to that church... they didn't know Gabriel was there before that.

Well, that list was a bit longer than I'd planned. The headlights idea in #124 was genius. Glad to see Ezekiel being less of a pussy. Whether or not Negan dies, a novel on him would be GREAT.

Jordan

No plans right now!

This is tough to write because The Walking Dead is my favourite story... I'm having a hard time believing the the saviours gunked up weapons work. If it weren't for The Governor making-out with his zombified daughter, or the constant killing of romers who's blood has most definitely spilled onto one of the survivors wounds then I would believe you. Your new "gunked up weapons" rule is to inconsistent with previous issues. It feels almost cheap. Robert I hope that something changes and changes soon. I like all out war but it feels cheap, unlike most arcs I have predicted

lots of All Out War and your so called "twists". I love the walking dead but this has been the least interesting arc. I also hope that TWD continues to be popular on TV at least until Negan, but I see a downfall coming soon, and I also hope that you don't milk the shit out of it. End the show by season 7, 8 by the latest.

<3 The Walking Dead
Dexter Bateman
Canmore, Alberta, Canada.

Just because something goes a long time doesn't mean it's being milked. We'll be lucky to make it to season 7, but if we go beyond that it'll be because we have a story to tell.

We certainly won't be able to tell the full story of the comics in seven seasons of the show.

Sorry you're not digging the arc... thankfully, it's over now. Maybe you'll like what comes next better.

The gunking up of the weapons is consistent. Them breaking the skin would be the same as a zombie bite breaking the skin. Normal skin contact or getting something on your mouth... kissing is just skin contact... doesn't do it.

Greetings Robert DeRobert and Sean Deshaun,

I gotta say Robert, on your AMA...

YOU WERE WRONG! You said we will learn Rick's final fate... not quite. BTW, can I ask a few questions? (Numbered, Sean. Your favorite)

1. Will Gregory do something badass that will change our minds about him?

Probably not... but he'll always think he's a badass.

2. How did Eugene and his crew make it out of the van in Issue 124?

They ran. They weren't completely surrounded yet, and Eugene knew the area and now how they could get on top of the building quickly.

3. Will we be ever getting another Special (Like an Andrea SPECIAL? Negan? Dwight?)

We've talked about it, but there'd have to be a pretty compelling reason to tell whoever's story.

4. How will A New Beginning start? (48 pages, Kirkman, you cray-cray.)

With the woman from the cover looking at us.

and 5. Please explain why Lily Caul is back in the comics *Cough* Issue 127 *Cough*

Best Wishes,
AndyTheZombie (Andy)
Murica, where the Kirkmans live

THAT IS NOT LILY!

Dear TWD,

I was incarcerated from November 12, 2012 - February 5th 2014, it was my first time ever involved with the law (other than skateboarding) and it landed me right in the joint. But what I wanted to share was while I was locked up, I had all of the volumes that were available sent in to me, I left there with Volumes 1-19. While I was there I had countless other inmates read them and get hooked on them. Even the C.O.'s at the jail were asking me to let them borrow them to read them while on their shifts. The tier I was on only 3 other inmates watched the TV show, by the time I had left the whole tier of 28+ were hooked on it. We watched every marathon that AMC had run and every Sunday @ 9 our dorm was quiet as a church mouse watching the show. I just wanted to write in and let you know just how many individuals with different tastes/backgrounds can enjoy the comic/show that you've created and continue to make. I highly doubt this will get published and or even read by you guys but I just wanted to share that information with you. Thank you for making my time locked up a little easier with your work, you'll never fully understand the appreciation. Much love and keep the issues comin!

R. Ewing

If this edition of Letter Hacks has taught us anything, the readers and watchers of TWD are a diverse group. Thanks for sharing in all the fun!

Great to hear, R. Glad to hear you're out and I hope you're doing well.

Greetings Kirkman and company,

Long-time fan, first time writer to any publication. Obligatory hats off to the success and appreciation for the many hours of story, and countless hours of imagination inspired, including the countless video games not even of the Walking Dead license and obviously inspired and reinvigorated by your revival of the zombie genre. Can smell your unique stink all over them.

Only one thing could inspire me to write in and that's because I want the dirt on my favorite character, and not in backstory book form, because Negan absolutely MUST live. I grip the pages in rage anytime someone compares him to the governor in LH, simply because this character is so much deeper. Brian is an off the deep end chaotic evil. Negan seems to be a much more

deliciously intriguing lawful neutral, in his own weird way. For the saviors Negan is the Law, and nothing is more important than

Negan or his law.

So amongst my fan friends the discussion of what Negan did pre-zombie is frequent. I've come to the conclusion that my favorite idea is seeing him as a corrupt cop, ala Training Day. His militant followers all have a very biker look, so at first I suspected he owned strip clubs or something. He definitely has just a touch of white collar to him. I don't see him as leading a biker gang. He definitely didn't have a heel turn like Brian, this guy was always bad and not afraid to show it, has always been a law all unto his own. I see him swooping in on his old underworld contacts and using them as the "army" by which he could gather his civilians and "protect". There's definitely 2 castes in his system, and the gentler folk that Rick tends to protect also exist in Negan's world, but are clearly 2nd class citizens who provide for the elites (himself). Yep, corrupt motorcycle cop all the way. Someone who always got what they wanted even in the old system and now is free to make the world his own. Dark Rick.

In short, please give us a spin off with Negan, and not so much a flashback. This is your best villain by far, and in light of the fact that I don't think you have the balls to kill off Rick yet, he's the reason I continue to read.

Obligatory Fuck You,
Matt Evyl
Las Vegas NV

I thought we'd learn more about Negan's past this arc, but maybe we'll just have to wait until it's revealed in a Negan Special, or somesuch.

Hey... he's still alive... so theoretically we'll find more out about him someday!

Yo! Robby K. and S-Mack!

I started reading the Comics in fall of 2012, and haven't stopped since. Started watching the TV show shortly after. I love them both (but a little more on the comics). There is seriously nothing in the Walking Dead franchise you haven't enticed me to sink my hard earned money into. So congrats on making The Walking Dead a serious obsession for me. So, having this obsession, I have a few questions.

1). I heard that if I have numbered questions I will be guaranteed a spot in letter hacks. Is this true?

No. It's just a coincidence.

2). What's up with The Walking Dead: The Covers vol. 2?? It's been postponed like 3 times!!

You'll see this sometime after THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR.

3). Kirkman! Make up your mind on the timeline of The Walking Dead! does it start in 2003? or 2012? or 1492?? This is bugging the heck out of me. You're very wishy-washy about it.

We have an internal timeline of the series events, but no specific starting date/year.

I don't like to nail down a starting date. I know this book will eventually be dated... but I want to stave that off for as long as I can. At this point... you can pick up issue one and it could be 2003... or it could be 2014... although there'd be a LOT more cell phones if it was.

4). If the apocalypse did start in 2003, that would mean that Carl would be 18 in 2014 (I did the math) which makes him eligible to graduate high school this year. Class of 2014! WHOO!

The book is clearly not progressing in real time.

5). In issue 122 it is revealed that Paul Monroe has a boyfriend. I have only one issue with this. Earlier in All Out War, when Negan reveals he had kidnapped Gregory, and he says to leave while they still can, Mr. Jesus says that all he has at the Hilltop is "a bunch of books". Wouldn't a significant other be worth mentioning, let alone going home for?

Unless you're bluffing.

Alex is a very close friend of Jesus... but not his boyfriend. Still, he obviously cares about the guy, so he was just bluffing.

Anyways, that's all I wanted to address. Thanks for an awesome reason to spend money and keep it the way it's going. I look forward to the ending of All Out War.

-Sam S.
from California
#BAYAREA

In three weeks, the double sized #127. It's perhaps the most surprising issue since... this issue? Lots of stuff we'll be talking about after that one, for sure. Talk then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be great! And VERY DIFFERENT! Buckle up, readers! Buckle up!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Two years... of relative peace and growth, and now we're here. Just how will these new arrivals impact Alexandria? And has prison rehabilitated Negan of swearing? (And if so, has Rick created the first prison that has successfully rehabilitated anyone? Genius!)

Now let's dive into your reactions to Rick slicing Negan's throat and other AOW shenanigans...

I did NOT see that coming!

Fuck! Fuck! Fucking fuck!

Cory

I love you, Cory Walker... I assume this is from Cory Walker.

Kirkman-

Don't you fucking dare kill fucking Negan! Really that's fucking all I wanna fucking say. Fucker.

Lon Levin
Philafuckingdelphia, P fucking A

I hope you're fucking happy.

I just involuntarily yelled out loud and shook my fist in victory while reading the end of this issue while everyone at the restaurant I was in stared at me. It's been a while since I've embarrassed myself in public that fully. Well done, Kirkman.

Erik

I just want to know what restaurant you were at. Sounds like it's frequented by judgmental pricks. I bet it's Wendy's.

Wendy's is awesome. Square burgers for the win.

Let him turn!

I hope that Rick dipped that knife in a walker before he cut Negan! He deserves to die and turn for what he and Lucille did to Glenn. Remember people he freakin killed Glenn!!!! Let him turn and strap his ass to the front gate as a warning to all! You mess with Rick, you get your ass handed to you. I hope this guy goes out slow and painful. I can't wait to see where #126 goes.

Charles Ecton
McDonough, GA

I hope you weren't disappointed... ;-)

Dear Walking Dead comic crew,

After reading the final page of issue #125, I could feel the collective cheer of the TWD fan base. Me on the other hand? I sulked all day. I would walk past my Negan action figure hanging on the wall and I would weep. I know that no character is safe and they'll all eventually die. I just hoped that maybe, just maybe that Negan and the saviors would come out on top in the war. Oh well, I just need to find a new character to like. Great writing and great art. Keep up

the amazing work. I can hardly wait for the exciting conclusion to "All Out War." Hopefully Negan can take down a few of the good guys before he goes.

Hugs and handshakes,
Travis Archibald

Be the first to update your Negan figure and glue some hair on that sonnuvabitch. I'm sure our online team would love to retweet something as gnarly as that.

Damn... we're going to have to do new action figures for all these people. I didn't consider that at all.

Dead Mr. Kirkman & that guy who always picks on everyone who writes in (love ya Sean),

I'd like to keep this short n' simple (as those are my favorite letters to read; why I wasted a whole sentence already is beyond me). I've really enjoyed what Negan has brought to the story but like most have despised him as a person. I also have probably "craved" his death more than most readers. That being said, I was left quite unsatisfied with the way he went out (assuming he's dead?). The second Rick started talking I knew where it was leading and just dreaded the panel when Rick did it. I was hoping for him to go out on a bad note so we could enjoy it a little more. Maybe that wasn't your intention at all. Are we supposed to not have enjoyed it as much as we all thought we would after he killed our favorite pizza delivery boy, or am I just crazy for forgetting all the bad he's already done?

Well so much for keeping it short... 'least I tried!

Micah

There have been 26 issues since he first appeared, so if you didn't understand him better by now, we wouldn't have done our jobs. Hey, I'm happy the guy's still around, too!

Crap, has he really been around for 26 issues already? Neat. I do hope after reading this issue, you all realize that Negan is definitely being punished for killing Glenn and Spencer and Holly and all the others.

For well over two years now, WALKING DEAD has been my go to favorite running comic. I get excited and look forward to every issue like it's a birthday present. And while some people complained about the extended ALL OUT WAR arc, I loved it from the beginning.

Negan was Kirkman's masterpiece creation. A fascinating and terrifying villain who was far more complex than The Governor could ever be. I loved him. But issue #125 just DID NOT WORK AT ALL. You're telling me that in the span of a two minute conversation with Rick, that Negan is ready to make peace with the communities once and for all? After all that's happened? All the bloodshed? Negan would never, for one moment, think that Rick would actually forgive him. He's way too smart for that.

Furthermore, to have Rick simply slash Negan's throat was a disappointingly bland way for Negan to get killed. And Kirkman is usually far too talented of a writer to be bland. I love the comic and I still do. I want to be clear about that. But sometimes you need to call out the flaws for the good of the whole and you let us down Kirkman. I feel like a middle-aged father talking to his teenage son. I'm not

angry, just disappointed.

Sincerely,
Your Loyal Fan Phil from Los Angeles

You assume too much. As you now know, Negan didn't die... and I do feel like in all the struggle for power and control, it's quite possible that Negan never considered the bigger picture, or the potential of what these people had. Negan is a very complex character, and he would be big enough to admit when he's wrong, no matter the circumstances.

My name is Jeff and I'm an addict. I have been reading The Walking Dead comics for seven years and watching the show for four. I have no plan on stopping.

I have to say that issue 125 took me off guard. I guess it did that for Negan too. Reading the comics for so long has taught me to second guess everything and everyone, but when Rick slashed Negan's throat I just stared at the picture in shock. I am a pacifist (this doesn't mean you avoid violence but it means that you seek to end violence through nonviolent means) so when Rick was giving his speech I thought he was taking the pacifist way. I was starting to think that perhaps the big surprise ending would be a partnership between Negan and Rick, and then BAM! Or I think the sound was "SVAASH!" Just crazy! The reason I read these books is because it keeps me guessing and keeps me shocked. Keep it up! So little stories do this for me.

I also want to say that I appreciate your response to the letter hack about Jesus being gay. In that Hacks a Christian emailed stating that they are so insulted that they are going to stop reading the comic. Well, I'm a pastor and I was upset by that guy's bitching about such a stupid topic. I think the way you handled it was excellent and you were more Christ-like than the Christian.

You sound like a pretty awesome pastor.

While I'm on the topic of Christianity, I need to say that I'm not too happy with Gabriel's character. I think his back story is great (a priest who threw away all he stands for because he feared for his safety) but his message is a bit weak. I'm not Catholic but I was excited to hear what this guy's theological interpretation of zombies would be. Robert, you have shown great skill in being able to get inside other's people's thinking and explain it, but I think you have failed to do this with Gabriel's character, and Hershel before him. Come on, no serious bible scholar would claim that zombies are the fulfillment of the prophecy about the dead being raised. Let's see a good talk about the question, "Where is God when you are being eaten by a walker?" If you ever want a theologian to bounce ideas off of, I'm here for you.

Your pastoral friend and fan,
Jeff

I will freely admit that Gabriel's character has certainly not gotten as much attention as I'd like him to. He's still around, and I do plan on featuring him in the story more moving forward... so hopefully I'll get things right this time.

Kirkman and Sean,

Is Rich Grimes a good guy or a bad guy? In most stories there is a clear and apparent good guy and bad guy. This is not the case in The Walking Dead. I know most people would say that obviously Rich is the good guy but I don't think TWD is that black and white, no pun intended. This is also what makes reading TWD so compelling. Just as Rich is giving a moving speech, just as any hero would, and is swaying his opponent to join the good guys he pulls a knife and slits Negan's throat, definitely not a good guy move. We've seen this before from Rich whether he was running over Martinez or brutally killing the hunters. All pretty standard for bad guys but definitely not for good guys. I guess what I'm saying is thanks for making such a complex and interesting lead character.

Since this letter will be published in the back of issue #127 I will throw out a wild guess who is on the cover, it is Judith. The story line has jumped 20 years and we find that Judith survived the shot gun blast her mother took when the Governor and his people stormed the prison. She was found by Lily and raised as her own.

Randy
Ohio

This Rich Grimes shit made me laugh more than any other letter this issue. (Sorry, Randy.) Rich Grimes is the new Jeff Grimes.

Yeah, this Rich Grimes sounds like a maniac. Also, a swing and a miss on the guess for this issue. A time jump sure, but not 20 years... and Judith is so dead it isn't funny.

Just finished #125. Very nice work.

In particular, I was blown away when Carl says to Mikey about people telling him to "...get used to the feeling of being scared and sad..." and then tells him not to listen to them. To this Mikey replies, "Uh, Okay". Carl is the grizzled veteran of a hundred battles; Mikey is the foxhole virgin.

Absolute brilliance. Carl shows us that he still has feelings, still has humanity. Mikey's response snaps us back to the reality that even in this fucked up world of TWD, kids are still gonna be kids. The questions remains, will Mikey take the death of his father like a normal kid, or will it harden him into a killing machine.

JB in Frederictom

Mikey's still around, and seems to have adjusted well... but I like that in an issue when Rick slices Negan's throat, folks can appreciate the smaller beats as well.

Dear Kirkman and Co,

I know that if this gets published it will be 2 issues from now, and I can almost 100% guarantee I am going to be incredibly sad and happy all at the same time. Because you have to figure Negan's going to die and I truly fell for Rick being all nice and cozy with him. But nope, twas all a lie and now Negan's gonna get like murdered by some left handed person with Lucille. Or not, who knows. But I do know that Dwight is going to die and I am going to go cry in a corner, because Dwight is literally my favorite character. And I know that you can be cruel, especially to people with crossbows.

I demand compensation for this injustice, mainly because I am a crossbow user myself. Be nice to Daryl and Dwight, they are contributing important things to the world. For example I swear Dwight is the only person with a crossbow in any comics I've read recently. And I know one day you're going to write me into the comics too with a crossbow and just be really cruel to me as well because of this. No of course I'm joking. But I know that the comic is going to change and I am glad, but at the same time you can't help but to feel sad and nostalgiac looking back at all that has happened. Just letting you know, I will stick with you through thick and thin.

Sincerely,
Brent, a random guy with a crossbow.

Except now Dwight's put down the crossbow for a bat... so... write us another letter to let us know how you feel about that.

Dear Walking Dead Team,

First, I have to admit I didn't read any of the comics until the night after the season 4 premier. I mean, I've never read a single comic book in my life. But I couldn't handle The Walking Dead being over yet and decided the best way to get my fix was to read the comic books. Well, I am now all the way caught up to issue 125! I'm hooked for life. You guys are awesome.

This is awesome. I love to hear this. Seriously, though... this is not the best comics has to offer, I swear. So try more comics now that you enjoy this one. You'll be glad you did.

Friends and family warned me about getting into comic books. They said no guy (except for comic book guys) would want to date a girl into comic books. They didn't think it was cool enough or an acceptable way to spend free time instead of going out. After reading them though...fuck that. Seriously screw anyone who judges me for reading these awesome books they aren't worth my time. I'll just kindly let them know they are missing out in life before a classy wink and slow walk away.

If you're reading, point blank period, your time is well spent. (And hey, no pressure... but if you're looking for recommendations beyond TWD, try any of Skybound's other titles.) And what's wrong with comic book guys?!

Holy crap... that's still a thing? People looking down on people for reading comics? I guess I'm so entrenched in this world that I've completely forgotten that

stigma from when I was growing up. It's so much lamer to be a wrestling fan... and there are tons of those.

So thank you for officially turning me into a nerd or geek or whatever is the correct thing to say. Bring on the nerdy guys!

Chelsea W.
LA SoCal

PS. Why do people complain about The Governor and Negan being the same? Isn't that what comic books are? There are the good guys and then a villain shows up the good guys win and repeat. I don't get what other storyline are waiting for? They can't seriously be waiting on a happy ending. I mean Robert (can I call you that? I feel like we're friends now) has said over over that everyone dies. Maybe I'm just a noob (did I even use that correctly) and have know idea what I'm talking about.

You really don't... because Negan and The Governor are COMPLETELY DIFFERENT... damn it.

Anyways this turned out way longer than expected, but I would love to be published and rub it in everyone's faces that said comics were a waste of time. I mean being in a comic is pretty awesome, right?! Well maybe not to them, but to me. So cut out anything if this needs to be shorter!

Chelsea, we hereby declare you officially awesome.

Dear Messrs. Kirkman and Mackiewicz,

I appreciate your storytelling, particularly the suspense during and between issues. In fact, I enjoy it so much that it quickly becomes unbearable, and my husband and I find it necessary to buy each issue as it comes out. This is unfortunate, because TPs are cheaper per page and prettier and last longer. So screw you, and shut up and take my money.

Certainly! And you can't write letters to TPBs—those fuckers are set in their ways. We still want to impress all of you, and keep it fresh and exciting!

I also enjoy the depth of character in your wonderful series.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah
San Francisco

Thanks for writing in, Sarah! Screw TPBs!

Dear Robert Kirkman,

Can zombies climb ladders and staircases? I eagerly await your reply.

Yours truly,
Zach

No. They cannot. BUT WAIT... in issue 8 they opened that door to the basement and two zombies were there--ready to come out! So... maybe some of them can! I'd say it's very rare for a zombie to retain the motor skills needed to successfully climb stairs. None of them can climb ladders. NONE.

Hi Letter Hacks,

In #125 you tried to answer to Jon.c from UK about still born babies inside of pregnant ladies. I have another question I've been trying to figure out for a moment. I'm currently writing a novel about a dhampire, a creature who's half human/half vampire, because of his father had been force to drink vampire blood and before turning, he wanted to have sex one last time with his wife.

Can we all agree that dhampire is not a great word... and I would be 100% more interested if dhampires were called anything but.

Why aren't they called Manpires? Is that better? Worse? I can't decide.

I think you see where I'm getting at : Hypotetically, what would happen in your universe if an recently bitten dude had sex with his girl? Of course, the poor guy would turn into a Z eventually, but what would happen to the baby? (Not to mention the unlucky woman, when she gives birth...) Half

human, half zombie. Serious shit. Admit it's a good one. Hell, be me guest, you can even use this idea for issue #574, when you'll run out of ideas (which I don't believe, but fuck it).

Ludovic Iadanza from Fucking France.

I think a person being recently bitten before intercourse would have no effect on the offspring. Everyone's infected already, technically, so it's not like he'd be passing anything extra on to the baby, and we've already seen that infected people can procreate just fine.

Dearest Mr. Kirkman,

The juxtaposition of "a side order of my dick up those asses" against maybe the most coherent thing Negan has ever said just a few pages later was completely priceless.

Love you, keep it real.

Robert

I'm glad someone appreciates all the hard work that goes into Negan's dialogue. Wait... did I write this letter?! Am I complimenting myself?! Last names, people!

Kirkman and Mackiewicz,

1. You recently announced a new set of novels, which is awesome! Are all 4 going to focus on Lilly, or will we see other characters come to the forefront, such as how the governor had his own novel?

You'll just have to wait and see. Continuity-wise... novel 5 will pick up chronologically immediately after where novel 4 (Fall of the Governor part 2) ended... so it might be safe to assume that will continue.

2. With regards to the telltale game, are we going to see any more characters from the comic appear there, or is that concept done?

Season 2 of the game isn't so far off our own timeline (well, as of #126 at least), so it would be harder to pull off that kind of crossover with a good deal of travel distance between them. The Telltale guys do such a good job crafting their own characters that they don't need to dip into our well.

Agreed. It's important to me that those games take place in the same world as ours. So I wouldn't want to stretch logic just to shoehorn a cameo.

3. In the comics, what would you do if you ran out of ideas for Rick's group? Would we move on from them, or do you feel like the comic wouldn't be the same without them. I know this has been addressed before with Rick, and if he were to die, but what about with the whole group?

Thanks for reading, and continue making an awesome comic series,

Shamefully a Negan fan,
Ollie Whittall, United Kingdom

While it may be possible to run out of "good" ideas... I stand firm in the belief that I will never run out of ideas for stories to do with this group.

In four weeks...FOUR GLORIOUS WEEKS... we return, and I promise you we won't skip another two years. Just return in time to learn more about newcomer Magna.

I can't wait FOUR WEEKS! Holy crap! We're going to need to go bi-weekly again soon. I won't know what to do with myself with all this free time!

-Robert Kirkman

And check out this preview of Robert's new horror series with Paul Azaceta, OUTCAST BY KIRKMAN & AZACETA. He's way too humble to promote it himself, but it's pretty great. And the first issue is 44 pages of story for only \$2.99. He's doing that a lot lately!

-Sean Mackiewicz

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Aw, man... That look on Rick's face after Carl walks away. Carl's just growing up too fast.

That's what happens when you do a time jump of an undetermined amount of time no matter what an editor says in a letters column, which the writer should have caught, but didn't... and now regrets.

But y'know... we've got to wait until next issue to talk about the time jump! Let's dive into mail about the conclusion of ALL OUT WAR! Which I'm sure is all positive!

Kirkman and Crew,

Issue #126

Problem #1 - Maggie Says..." I Don't Know, I-- I Think Glenn Would Like That." Really? Let's scrape him up and ask him?

Problem #2 - Rick Saying... "You're Going To Rot in Jail Until You Die An Old Man, Negan. You're Fucked." Rick is now Judge, Jury and Executioner! Not Barney Fife with Otis sleeping one off in the cell!!!!

This is a post-zombie apocalypse world, the world as we knew is gone.

To quote METALLICA's epic... AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

"Nothing can save you
Justice is lost
Justice is raped
Justice is gone

Pulling your strings
Justice is done

Seeking no truth
Winning is all
Find it so grim
So true, so real"

Ralph
Savannah, GA

I'm tempted to respond to each and every letter this month with Metallica lyrics... I found a cassette of Master of Puppets on the street and it's been love ever since... but man, their lyrics sound like high school poetry.

I can't tell if they liked the issue or if they're complaining... but points for the Metallica lyrics.

What's with the two guys named Carson (Dr. Carson and the Carson that helps Eugene escape)? They play similar good guy roles and are kind of hard to keep apart. Are they separated family, a pseudo civil war brother versus brother thing? Or is it the only natural name for a peripheral do-gooder?

Nick

We've touched upon it in AOW, but yes, they're brothers.

Totally brothers.

Hey Guys,

I recently brought my childhood comic collection to a local comic shop to see if anything my 10 year old self bought was worth something. I hadn't been in a comic store for about 20 years, so while I was waiting I started looking around. Jumping off the shelf were your covers for issues 3-5, so I picked up a book and started leafing through it. As I scanned the artwork and chuckled at a few of the lines, that old rush I hadn't felt in a lifetime started creeping into my chest. I wanted to finish that book and I couldn't wait to find out what happened next. Just thought you guys should know you singlehandedly got me back into comics, 20 years after I had "outgrown" them.

Can't wait to see what's around the next bend,
Jordan Vardon

Any time's a good time to get back into comics, but you picked a great time, when there's greater diversity in the stories being told in the mainstream, as well a lot of talented folk telling them... at least at Image anyways.

Welcome back! And seriously... try other Image Comics... and don't stray too far from that. It's a jungle out there.

Let me start by saying that I've loved The Walking Dead for a long time. It got me into comics. But All out War has been... disappointing.

As issue 125 was coming to a close, I was thinking (no, hoping) that Negan was being sarcastic when he agreed with Rick. I thought, "Negan is just teasing his enemy, and on the last page of this issue he's gonna bash Rick's head open with Lucille." After all that time, it'd take more to stop Negan than to just say "hey stop being a jerk and let's work together." Surely that thought (working together) has crossed Negan's mind at some point, and surely he's dismissed it. The dude loves power, it's what he's about. He doesn't care about fixing the world.

To quote Metallica's "Battery":

**"Crushing all deceivers, mashing non-believers
Never ending potency
Hungry violence seeker, feeding off the weaker
Breeding on insanity"**

That might as well be Negan's theme song.

So I was pretty disappointed when the complete opposite happened at the end of 125. Negan was stupider than I thought, and Rick survives yet another near-death scenario. Rick's lived through too much, and frankly I'm getting sick of the guy. He's gonna die eventually, right?

Of course!

Then we have #126. The most anti-climatic ending imaginable. Rick decides to keep Negan alive and be civil about it. Okay, but if Rick wants to rebuild civilization, he needs to be logical about it; people and resources are limited. Keeping Negan alive means feeding him, and if he's sitting in prison for the rest of his life not doing anything productive, that's a huge waste of food. They'll also need someone to guard his prison, which is a waste of manpower. Plus it's sure to cause a lot of counterproductive drama. Keeping Negan alive just doesn't make any sense logistically.

127 looks like it'll bring something different to the table, so I'm hoping this series gets back on track. If not, at least there's always Invincible. That series only keeps getting better by the way, keep up the awesome work there!

Mike

You guys, I could talk about the awesomeness of Invincible all fucking day.

I know the ending wasn't what people expected and that's kind of the point. Every "event" with The Walking Dead can't be an explosive story where major characters die. When you're trying to do a series that runs as long as it appears this series is going to go... you have to change things up. TWD was always building to an extended quiet period, that's what "All Out War" was about and that's why we sort of skipped over that part jumping to these issues.

Rick learned, Rick was right... everything you've SEEN him live through, made him a better person and a better leader. To see him kill Negan and for things to continue on as they had before... I feel, would have been a mistake.

And for Rick to die... well... you'll just have to wait a while longer for that.

Hey guys,

In giving my thoughts of 126, I first want to say that I was so sure Rick was going to die due to walker disease in 125, Carl was going to kill Negan in 126, and 127 was going to be a time skip that eventually leads to Carl becoming the villain somewhere down the line. Additionally, I thought Rick's probable death was so perfectly timed that I was so sure anything but his death would ruin the arc.

Now that I have read 126 and eagerly await 127, I think deciding to let Negan and Rick both live was an incredibly mature decision. That speech that Rick gives to the people and later to Carl felt a lot like you guys were talking to your characters (especially to Carl). From that point of view, the final pages read like this:

"Listen guys, we know that this can end with Rick dying from infection, Negan from blunt force trauma, and Carl as a renegade down the line. We're also well aware that you want to see Negan die in whatever form of justice this story has left. Unfortunately, we can't do that. If Negan or even Rick dies, it's clear nothing will change. It's still going to be organized in 1-3 year arcs where someone challenges the gang, the challengers lose, a main character or two dies along the way, and we repeat. We have to break the cycle and give the comic something other than structured depression, because frankly, it deserves better than the path we're going down right now."

Pretty much... but I'll argue the path we went down was necessary to facilitate the transition to these new stories. There's always been a plan at work here.

Reading into it like that, giving it a happy-ish, civil ending seems to prove necessary. Because of this issue, I have no idea what the comic is going to be when it gets its funky reboot-looking thing next month. Whether intentional or not, I also like how this issue subverts expectations by being the complete opposite of 100. Instead of being over the top and booming, it was muted and contemplative (barring an exciting Rick v. Negan fight). And like 100, it also introduced the new leader of the Saviors for the first time!

And as for the upcoming group the comic is going to follow, the tagline of 129, "Even now, they still find new ways to dispose of the dead," tells me that this new group of characters exists some amount of time removed from the original group. With the hopeful way 126 ended, it almost seems like this issue is an investment into this time skip future, where maybe we WILL see Negan die as an old man and maybe we WILL see Rick turn into the patriarch he is poised to be.

In conclusion I just wrote this to say that I thought the issue was great. It sets us up for a great time skip, the best character (Negan) didn't have to die, and it acts as a great first step to break the cycle this series has been on for some time.

Best,

Alexander C.

Rick is definitely trying to break that cycle... but he's

basically slowly torturing Negan to death, right? At least he's not embracing the fairy tale of imprisonment as a way to rehabilitate criminal behavior... they're really not even trying to do that... but he's not letting Negan off easy by any measure.

Mr. Kirkman,

First of all , I am a huge fan of the TV show and the comic. The TV show actually inspired me to start reading the comic. From that point, I went back and read all the collected editions so that I could catch up. As a mid-40's African-American male I especially appreciate the way you present your black characters and avoid the unfortunate clichés that plague many other TV shows and books. Unfortunately, in media that is not considered "black" (in essence works that are created by white writers with predominantly white characters) black characters either do not play a major part, are not fully formed, and sometimes only serve to uplift the white characters by being a wise sage (as much as I like his work see certain Stephen King novels.) You consistently avoid those clichés. In a recent TV episode you had Bob, Michonne, and Tyreese accompany Daryl on a medicine run. You broke the unspoken rule that you can't have more than one black character appear in scenes and contribute meaningfully. In the comic, you show Michonne having realistic relationships with Tyreese, Morgan, and Ezekiel. You show black characters as heroic, flawed and resilient. This is not to say that whites and blacks don't need to associate. This is a given in your work. It's just that you show a diverse group of people associating in a realistic, diverse way. Another person who is known for doing this is Shondra Rimes (Scandal, Grey's Anatomy) who is an African-American female. I salute you for this sir and look forward to many more years of TWD.

Marcus G.
Chelsea, Alabama

Very cool, Marcus. Thanks for writing in. Comics have been a very white-centric medium for a long time and anything I can do to work against that I'm happy to do. Expect plenty more minorities to be popping up in this series... because I hate white people.

Oh, Kirkman,

Let's get right into this you little minx, you. Rick and Negan both live, well played. The ending of this arc has been rolling around in my head since October, AND THIS IS WHERE IT HAS TAKEN US?! You really got me here. This was certainly unexpected to me. I was confident one or the other was going to loose their head here, and you've struck us all with the unthinkable. Is this the ending you had in mind from the beginning of AOW, or has this ending grown from the fan's positive response to Negan and his filthy yet hilarious banter? Where is this going to lead us in the future? Is Negan going to escape and be a reoccurring threat, like a Scooby-Doo villain? "I'll get you next time, you meddling survivors. You and your stupid cyclops!"

It was always the plan that both Negan and Rick would survive... there's a lot more story to be told with both of them. And I promise none of it is in the Scooby-Doo variety.

I like Negan. I have been in his corner for a long time, probably since he killed Spencer. But as Negan is on the losing end of this war, I think I'm going to have to side with Carl on the "should he live" subject. I think Rick is making a huge mistake by letting him live and I think a lot of people who have followed him are going to lose respect for him when this comes back to bite him in the ass.

I agree. Rick's got this pathological need to be proven right, but he's in a no-win situation. If he kills Negan, he reinforces the idea that violence solves problems, and if he doesn't, you're keeping a murderer alive in a basement... which never ends well.

We'll see! You never know.

And now for my only real complaint regarding the ULTIMATE CHAPTER of AOW: Maggie, man. You had to know this was coming. She just accepts that Negan is going to be living as a prisoner with them from now on? She decides that Glenn would have liked that they made him live? Growing old next to where she and their children rest their heads every night! C'mon, man. I know these characters are your brain children but gimme a break. IS ANYBODY OTHER THAN CARL GOING TO OBJECT TO THIS LUNACY?

All the same we've accomplished something here. We made it

to the end of AOW. I think I'm going to go get a drink, my mind is exhausted. Cheers, guys. I've been addicted to this series for a long time. Thank you for making it so enjoyable.

Jake Hood
Detroit, MI

Thank you for sticking with it. We appreciate the support.

Dear Sean & that other guy,

"Jesus is gay"...homosexuality is right or wrong...fuck all that shit...Kirkman knocking Sean for watching pro wrestling? You're breaking my heart here, Robert. And, no, your half-assed, tongue-in-cheek apology at the end of your pronouncement doesn't cut it here, pal. I'm a 40-year-old businessman who is often knocked for his love of both comics & pro wrestling, and this was the last place I'd expect a knock on the greatest form of sports-entertainment known to man!

Robert's first comic was a wrestling one! Now he's too big for it?! For shame, man.

That comic was unpublished! Doesn't count! Fuck wrestling!

I think the hardest hit with this is the fact that the fate of my ultimate fantasy WD storyline has just been sealed: Rick & the group stumbling upon the undead bad-ass & pro-wrestling legend The Undertaker. Now that dude could kick some major zombie ass! And it didn't help my temper with the fact that you're kicking me when I'm down: on the heels of reading the last bi-weekly issue & coming to terms with a longer wait between issues.

On a lighter note, All Out War was fucking epic! I still love you, Kirkman...I just love Sean more!

Ross Blair
Richmond Hill, GA

Everyone loves Sean more. He's the new Sina. Whatever.

I'm the fucking people's champ, is what I am.

I'm like the Rick Flair of comics. Nobody liked him right? He was a villain, wasn't he?

Everyone loves Ric Flair now! Stop playing dumb. Now I gotta find a letter that'll give you a good ol' kick in the nuts.

Mr Kirkman and crew,

I am just finishing Issue #126 and think i can talk for a majority of fans that feel we have really been played a fool! All out war ended in such a bad way! Seriously, Negan is alive? Whiskey Tango Foxtrot!! This guy was responsible for numerous deaths and the destruction of the ASZ! Why on earth would Rick spare him after all this! I understand people would love for Negan to be around for a while, but it could have been done another way. Negan has done much worse than the Governor ever has and yet Rick allows him to live! This is BS!!!! He promised Carl he would Kill him, Maggie should honestly walk up to him and blow his brains out all over the place!

What happened to this Comic, have you been getting soft. Did you get complaints about the gore from killing Glenn?

What?! Soft?! Damn... that hurts. And complaints only make me want to double down, so no worries there.

This is a survival horror comic and in wars many people die. it just seems a lot of C-D list characters died! I hope things shaken this book to make people more excited, because All out war ended with a real fizzle!

Disappointed
Chris

Bah! It's a survival horror comic that's been around so long that the characters have learned to survive. You gotta shake things up, man! Trust me.

Dear Kirkman and the wonderful others,

Was I the only one looking forward to a world without Rick?

Not one letter has stressed this! When you all first set the story up like Rick was on the way out, I like the army of other TWD traditionalists was shocked, angry and scared thinking you were making a huge mistake. But seeing how well the group rallied and worked together seamlessly, for example, when Rick was struck with the bolt, I saw a glimpse of the new world that you were going to masterfully create...a trans-egalitarian society where leadership and duty roles shift and move when stresses were applied...leaving behind a scarred world of groups controlled by the whim of a single madman (tell me which leader aint crazy!).

I must say I was a bit dissapointed when this did not happen, but I am excited to see where this is going now....civilization's original intention was to fight off death..Gilgamesh, the hero of the walled city of Uruk, leaves the city to find immortality. When he fails at this task the best consolation is to return to and defend his city, mankind's best defense against death.... very archetypal and deep waters you have us in Kirk!

Jesse C. Nowak
San Marcos, Texas

People should be very careful not to fall in love with their own speculation and then be disappointed when the thing you enjoy doesn't go that way. I hear the complaints, and I get them... but to keep this book fresh after 127 issues... things need to change and evolve just as much as these characters do. I hope you're digging where we went with the series after All Out War.

Hey Kirk and Mack,

Alright so I just finished Chapter 12 of this amazing All Out War arc and I just want to start by praising you about the arc as a whole. I think All Out War was one of the better parts of this series and that's saying something.

I read Letter Hacks and somebody mentioned Father Gabriel and I'm kinda wondering where on Earth did that guy disappeared to. I think I remember somebody campaigning for him a dozen issues back but I see that didn't work out too well considering the guy is yet to make an impact on the comic since the Hunters. Not complaining, just saying.

He's still around! He'll have his day!

Back to All Out War. I was really upset for a moment about how it ended. I was kinda angry that Negan didn't die but I reread the last page and I actually realized that this is a way cooler way to end it. I'm kind of excited to see what happens to Negan throughout the rest of TWD. I'm curious to see how you have him react to rebuilding the communities.

I'm also excited to see what happens next issue (DOUBLE SIZED, YES!) It'll be cool to see Dwight leading The Savivors.

Finally though I gotta ask about The Walking Dead Escape. I looked at the ad and it looked pretty sweet and I decided I really wanted to go to it, but when I looked at the locations I was disappointed. I live in NY and I was expecting to see one in the city or around it but there wasn't. The closest one was in Atlanta an as much as I want to I probably can't fly out to go to it... My question is will you guys be hosting more of this event in the North East?

Thanks for reading guys. Keep up the good work.

Tommy Daviau
Syracuse, NY

Man, it's going to be too late for this, but we have an event in good ol' Hartford, CT on June 7th... with additional dates in Minneapolis, San Diego and throughout Florida later this year.

And the tour will be expanding from there... so keep an eye on thewalkingdeadescape.com for updates on new locations.

In four weeks... Rick and Carl go on a road trip...

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be awesome! See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

And this is why you kill a motherfucker dead. Nod your heads in agreement, yes, even you pacifists.

This month we dig into your deeply considered, well thought out reactions to #127. You loved it. You love us. It's like one big ol' electronic group hug.

Yeah... this is going to be weird.

Ok.. where do I start? I had my doubts at the end of All Out War... mainly because every issue of the arc that I downloaded (I buy the print issues as well don't you worry about that but this way i can read them straight away) as soon it was put up on comixology at 10:15pm on Wednesday in Australia(Issues come out thursday here) i sat on the edge of my seat reading... waiting.. expecting.. some main character to die, i was disappointed. But I had faith that Kirkman knew what he was doing, and now i've just read issue #127 and I'd like to apologise for that tiniest amount of doubt I had, holy shit well done. Here come the numbers!

1. The intro with the new characters and that giant herd? Holy shit Charlie Adlard you are amazing, those were some amazing panels of beautiful art that should be in an art gallery.

2. Jesus' new look... Or should I say Samurai Jesus, it took me a while to notice it was him, but PLEASE PLEASE can we get a Samurai Jesus figure riding on that horse with the sword and all ASAP!

I would love to make that so.

3. Rick and Carl... Hipster Rick and Carl? Shaved head and beard on rick, hipster looking classes on Carl, not saying the looks are bad, I'm loving the new Rick but yeah... hipsters. What was the process on deciding the new looks for the characters?

I've gone over this before, but the world of TWD rejects your notions of hipsterism. Flat out.

I agree. I mean... I GUESS they could pass for hipsters... but that certainly wasn't the intent.

4. The pigs arse.. I know Charlie loves drawing ass cracks sticking out of pants, but that panel with pigs ass in full view to the right.. really Charlie?

Englishmen really know their way around a pig's ass, I've been told. Or is that the Scots? Is there a difference?

Isn't that the Welsh? Hey... two Americans attempting British humour!

5. There's a million other things i want to mention, wheres michonne? will she look different? maggie and her baby? etc etc. But the most important thing I think of the whole issue is the conversation between

Carl and Negan, this really made those last few panels in #125 make sense to me, that Negan could consider Ricks bigger picture idea, he is obviously a very complex character and I hope to see more Carl and Negan conversations to come, all their conversations throughout the previous issues have been amazing.

Maggie and her baby appear on an October cover, so... October for some answers.

I can't wait 4 weeks :(!

Jared
Western Australia

The real bummer of ALL OUT WAR and the accelerated shipping schedule is that people now complain about our MONTHLY schedule. Thanks to Charlie (just being honest) this book has been on time like clockwork for four years? Five? I don't know when the last time we shipped late was... but it's been a long damn time... and with no fill-ins.

Honestly, we should be throwing Charlie a parade every month... not complaining the book doesn't come out even MORE often!

That said, we'll be shipping two issues in October... and if Charlie doesn't kill me, we'll try to do that from time to time... because we love you guys.

Dear Kirkman and co.

Just read 127 and I love how everything seems to have progressed over the 2 year span and rick's new appearance is relle cool and relle shows how much he's endured

This not fixing people's typos and misspellings thing is confusing, Sean. It's relle hard to figure things out sometimes.

Having Carl confiding in negan Is an awesome concept as well since negan admired Carl's maturity and toughness throughout the last 3 volumes

I was just worried that michonne wasn't featured at all in this issue and jesus happened to be using a sword. just curious if that was a coincidence or if something might have happened to michonne in the 2 year gap

Can't wait to see where this is headed

Vishal Dusty

You've probably noticed by now that there are a lot of people with swords. And for the record, NONE of them have been Michonne's (look closely). If she's dead... she took the sword with her. Man... now I'M worried...

Dear Robert,

I like pirates. Pirates have eyepatches. Please give Carl an eyepatch and have a zombie eat his dorky glasses.

Thanks,
Carl Elvis

You like eye patches so much, wear one yourself. We don't do Governor chic.

Dear Sean and Robert,

Love the new direction. Love the new characters. Love the fast forward. Anxious to find out what happened in the time we readers missed. Please don't ever stop writing this comic and I'll never stop reading it (unless I die.)

Erik

P.S. I wasn't in a Wendy's. Although if there was a Wendy's near where I work I likely would have been. I was in a Papa Gino's. Just as judgmental as Wendy's with none of the Wendy's value menu.

Papa Gino's >>> Wendy's. My brother used to work in a Papa Gino's. He's doing much better now.

I knew it! I fucking knew Negan was too awesome to kill off. And LOLLOLOLOLOLOLOLOLOLOLO to all the assumers out there thinking that you guys would kill off such a kick ass polarizing character. Negan is the SHIT! When Negan was first introduced, I was so jacked about the character that I went out and bought the Negan action figure. Black and white version, of course. AND I DON'T BUY ACTION FIGURES!! That's how you know he's bitchin. Anyway...I absolutely love what you guys are doing with the progression of this book. Rick's decision to jail Negan instead of killing him was a baller move but could (and probably will) come back to bite him in the ass. Immediately I question how sturdy this make-shift jail is. Can it hold Negan? Will he escape? If he escapes will he be good Negan or bad Negan? Did Negan make peace with the Lord like all other jailed convicts do? Does Negan give himself some sick jailhouse tats? Will Negan and Carl become Facebook friends? Will Negan start writing into Letter Hacks?!?! I guess we'll just have to wait and see! DUH DUH DUH!!!!!! Keep up the killer work, men. Loving this fucking book.

Jared
Toledo...Soon to be Gainesville, FL...Ohio

Of all the gimmicks that attempt to find their home in Hacks, no one's tried to impersonate Negan. Don't start.

He's not doing Negan... he's just from Florida! See what happens when all the letters are positive?! I start criticizing the readers!

Robert, Sean and the rest of the TWD team!

I would love to congratulate you all on issue 127. It exceeded all my expectations for the issue, I was blown away.

But the real reason I wrote this letter to congratulate Charlie Adlard. Charlie is one of my favourite illustrators of all time and I think he drew issue 127 beautifully. The way he handled the time jump was navigated exceptionally with the aging on characters faces. Not only do they look a couple of years older, they look more experienced and wiser.

Of course it's not just the faces, but the hair! Rick's

beard is huge, Jesus' hair is.....Not like Jesus anymore. (Shall we call him Paul now?)

GOOD question.

As an aspiring illustrator myself, I can only dream of the day I can draw even half as well as Charlie Adlard.

Finley Neilens,
Plymouth, England

Try perfecting a pig's ass first. Good info that you fellows know your way around one.

WOW 127 was amazing !!! 2 part question

1) How well can Rick actually walk ? does he have no strength at all on his one leg?

Very little. Hence the cane.

2) and will his walking ever improve ? or is he doomed to be a limperson mcgimperson forever ?

Only time will tell.

hosjes
surrey

bc
canada

wait I forgot

3) it looks like there is a cable attached to ricks "claws" can he control that?

It's a cable that is anchored to his back so that when he moves his arm out, his claw opens and closes so he can pick stuff up.

Hi Robert,

Before #127 I didn't think this book could get any closer to being an Old West tale. Cowboy hats, savages, bandits, samurai cowboys, the sheriff, his posse, running for the border (well escaping the prison), gunslingers being haunted by their past, a preacher man, shooting guns out of people's hands, epic showdowns, last stands. Turns out you just need to add more blacksmiths, get some drifters, a jailhouse, round up the herd and settle the frontier. It was a cracking read (loved it). Much less of a post-apocalyptic nod towards Romero and heading off into the sunset with Leone.

The Western is in every American's blood. Those tropes lend themselves to so many different kinds of stories.

You have talked about your horror genre influences before when creating TWD, have you also felt Westerns have played a large part in the world you have created (or is it just the natural progression of the storytelling running a parallel)?

Cheers.

Jeremy, UK

My love of Westerns is certainly playing into things now, that's for sure.

Walking Dead Geniuses,

Things I said a year ago:
1. I have no desire to watch a show about Zombies.
2. I have not read a comic book since the Archie's in the early 70's and have no desire to start today.

Flash forward to today:

1. I have watched all the shows to current and

absolutely love them! They are the best writing and concept I have seen for a long time.
2. I am current on all of the graphic novels and can't wait for the release of each new issue. The art and the writing are amazing! I also love how the show and the novel are different so that each remains interesting.
3. I visited a comic book store to purchase #127 today and purchased volume 1 of Invincible upon the recommendation of the shop person.

Thank you for the work you do and the talent you share with all of us!

Tricia

That's awesome, Tricia! I predict that in a year from now you'll have read everything INVINCIBLE and dug into MANIFEST DESTINY and the other great Skybound titles.

I'd like to recommend OUTCAST, which is already in stores at the time this is printed! Actually, I believe issue 2 will be out very soon. Check it out.

Also, glad that we got you hooked! Welcome aboard!

I'm sure I'm not the only one to have found the new-look Rick and Carl to be pretty unexpected. I think it could have been handled easier, if the first panel had read "One year later" or something like that. I get that Rick might be the new Gregory and that Carl has to grow up, but still, I'm fairly sure I'm not the only one to have gone back to view previous comics to see if the talent had changed in light of the stylistic change. It's jarring.

Having said all that, I'm enjoying the ride, just a bit more wary now.

Niall

It was meant to be jarring. Having a caption revealing that a lot of time had passed... would have ruined the fun.

Kirkman,

Hmm. The Walking Dead #127...was...Totally Absorbing! Even compared to cutting edge stuff like Batman Eternal and Futures End, which I read the same day.

"Cutting edge," I love it! You reveal yourself, Shaw!

Ha! Man... those DC comics are breaking new ground! It's just like... certainly no other superhero comics that have ever been published. Sean's right... this is explaining so much.

New characters, new costumes, and not only did the Stinkers(?) actually appear--they killed somebody! Not to mention said Stinkers were shown en masse, and some of them even looked like shocked that they were being herded. Do you think, could it be: Zombies who actually Think, instead of just reacting?! Liking the new characters a lot, but Connie seems unnecessary and specious--we've already got Michonne. Wait, what...what happened to Michonne? She at the Hilltop...? She wasn't even mentioned in the issue!...and I didn't even notice until right now! I suppose she could've died in the last two years. So... Where. Is. Michonne?

Chilling next to Carmen Sandiego.

Also I just flashed on something. What happened to

the grenades, from AOW? They couldn't all have been used, right? Well, why not just throw at least one into the big pack of Stinkers and be done with it!! Magna

seems the perfect female opposite to Rick. Even more than Andrea. Is that what you have in mind--oops: Spoiler Alert!--or maybe a love triangle?

I think Rick and Andrea have too strong a bond for that. So strong a grenade couldn't break them up!

I should also tell you, I spoiled the ending for myself: I read the last page before the rest of the issue! It didn't Really spoil anything for me, though - it just made it more fascinating!! I did spend the whole, or maybe half the issue thinking Jesus was Negan, though. Maybe that's what you were going for anyway, who knows. But since when does Jesus have black hair? "A New Beginning", indeed. In case you couldn't tell, I feel this issue really struck a chord. Say hey to the gang from me.

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

"Say hey to the gang from me" is my new favorite way to end a letter. I'm ending all my emails with that this week.

Dear walking dead crew,

I want to keep this as short as possible (because I hate it when some dumb kid's letter drags on forever).

After the season 4 finale of the TV show, I started reading the Comics. Needless to say, my new found obsession escalated quickly. So here I sit, anxiously awaiting the release of issue 128. And I must say, way to go! You guys have a knack for developing TWD characters in ways that other books/comics haven't even touched. The last few pages with Carl and Negan gave me chills, literally! But I must say, part of Negan's original charm was his ability to use syntax and curse words in an intelligent and well thought out manner. Which left me feeling pretty surprised to see him speaking so PG 13 in issue 128. I can't wait to see why the last two years impacted Negan so drastically! You guys are awesome, keep cranking out awesome shit for me to read!

ps,
PLEASE go back to releasing TWD bi-weekly!

We're doing those two issues in October, jeesh!

pps, Charlie Adlard and Dave Stewart- the cover art for issue 128 was the best yet! TWD crew always manages to develop every issue into a work of art.

Bonnie Sams
Atlanta, Georgia.

Sweet! Thanks for writing in, Bonnie! Say hey to the gang from me.

This month we'll be in San Diego working on our tans inside the lovely San Diego Convention Center (that's what it's called, right?). Walking Dead will be well represented with Robert and Charlie in attendance. Check the Skybound.com site for panel and signing info and news on exclusive items, like for instance, your very own LUCILLE or a shirt that makes you look like mf'n EZEKIEL, or even your very own Ezekiel ACTION FIGURE. And that's just the tip. Have fun til then, y'all!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, crap... Comic-Con is coming up, isn't it? I need to get caught up on scripts. Sheesh.

Say hey to the gang from me!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

They can... talk?! Now we're getting to the good stuff...

That's certainly a weird development! Stay tuned!

LETTERS!

Dear Kirk & Co.,

Loving the time jump "of an undetermined amount of time" and the little mysteries it's created amongst our beloved Survivors. Two points of concern:

1. Magna sounds an awful lot like Rick did at the end of issue #70 and Rick looks an awful lot like Douglas Monroe did back in those early ASZ days. We all know history repeats itself eventually for those unaware. Is Rick watching his back carefully enough?

Only time will tell. I have to address this Douglas thing, though... you might remember Douglas looking something like Rick does now, but they're actually quite different. Go back and compare them.

2. Why would Andrea buy that Magna & Co. never saw another living person out there? We all know that if you kill you live. Surely it's suspicious if you can make it 7 months without seeing another breather out in the world, even if you are a newly introduced peripheral character that we don't quite care about yet.

OR it's possible that this far into the zombie apocalypse, people are few and far between and the only ones who have survived this long did so by forming communities that are very far apart and hard to just stumble across in seven months of traveling. OR... she was lying.

Looking forward to seeing what unfolds in issue 129. Bummed we're back to a standard monthly schedule. That accelerated All Our War saga got me spoiled.

Best,
Sean

We got two issues in October. You'll do just fine, Best Sean.

Starting in 2015 we'll put the book out weekly. 52 issues a year! Think we can do it, Sean? Charlie? Anyone? C'mon, guys! It'd be so fun!

Dear Cpt. Kirk and Crew,

Congratulations for making an awesome comic book series. I started reading the comics because the show was amazing. I have now caught up with the series, so issue 128 was the first issue I got out of the gate. Great twist with keeping Negan alive in issue 126. So, I have some questions and ideas (sorry if any of the Q's/ideas are in the governor book series or TWD game, I just started both of them).

1) Why haven't we seen anyone holed up in a store, like Sam's Club? Whenever I go in that place, I think how perfect it would be for a zombie apocalypse, with all the food and high shelves.

I would think that those would've been raided pretty early. That's everyone's first idea, right?

Exactly.

2) Why haven't any characters brought up the idea of going on a boat, and living off the sea? At this point in the comic it probably wouldn't matter, but maybe a group could break off from the communities (or from one of the groups in the other series) and try going to the Atlantic Ocean, or maybe a river. And even though the Atlantic Ocean is a bit away from D.C., it's not like the group hasn't traveled far distances before.

We'll be dealing with this very soon. BUT I will say it takes a LOT of specific knowledge to live on the sea... and it's really just not practical long term.

3) We've already seen the Alexandria Safe Zone, and we'll see The Hilltop in 129, but are we going to see the other 2 communities in the next few issues, or will we have to wait a while to see The Kingdom and/or The Sanctuary?

It's going to be a while before we've learned the status of every character. Not too long... but a while.

Thank you for reading my letter, and again, superb job with the entire TWD franchise. Please DO NOT STOP making these comics. Great job to the entire TWD team.

Noah Jacobs
Fruitport, Michigan

Thanks!

To Mr. Kirkman & his talented coworkers

As a (nearly) 50 year old woman, you wouldn't think walking dead would be my thing. I actually did resist reading it for a long time because I was

pretty burned out on the whole zombie thing after Marvel Zombies. (Yes, I am aware RK wrote that one too) But I have to say, after my 15 year old son got interested, I got interested. And we were completely hooked. It has become our 'thing'. So thanks for that.

Awesome. Also, Walking Dead >>>>> Marvel Zombies.

Man... doing Marvel Zombies actually cost us a reader?! Now I REALLY regret doing that series.

Re: All out War, I really don't understand why anyone has a problem with it. It was awesome! You did a few things that I did not see coming, and I really appreciate that in a writer. The only disappointment was Shiva. But I feel that everyone including the people working on the book were probably a bit bummed about that.

We haven't seen Ezekiel yet! Maybe he's got a giraffe now! Fingers crossed!

Really, really good storytelling. I really don't know what else to say.

I should also probably mention that I have worked at comic shops & comic con's for about 20 years now. Kudos from everyone down at Warp 9 comics.

Sincerely,
Kitty Dunn

Thanks for reading, Kitty! The best is yet to come... I assume.

I think so, but I'm biased.

Letter Hacks,

With Negan locked up and Dwight taking over as leader of the survivors, it'll be interesting to see how his relationship plays out with his wife, Sherry. Are they going to reconcile? Or is Dwight so disgusted and angry at her, that he wants nothing to do with her? Or something else entirely? Now that Negan is locked up, where do his wives fit in with the group? They turned their backs on their husbands and children to be more or less just a concubine to this leader who has now lost. Do their respective husbands and families accept them back?

James Moore

These are all excellent questions, James, that we endeavor to mostly answer in this comic eventually. Man, maybe we better go back to two a month to get to Dwight quicker....

Or maybe we'll be seeing Dwight before you know it?!

After All Out War's conclusion, I didn't expect much from the next few issues and I am still kind of up in the air as to what to think about 127 and 128 of The Walking Dead. First off, I think the new logo sucks all kinds of ass and you need to go back to the larger, more traditional logo. Please do that, because I can barely tell what book I am looking out without a large title to make the book jump out.

May I suggest spectacles? Or just identify it by Charlie and Dave's cover art... But we're not going back. We dig it.

Negan is trying to manipulate Carl, but Carl is leaving for an apprenticeship at the Hilltop. Now,

Negan is going to have to talk someone else into

helping him escape (that's what he's doing. Working in the prison system myself, I see his kind every day). This little group of individuals that has been brought in has not learned to trust our main cast yet, and these are the people who are going to be manipulated by Negan into helping him escape, setting up what might possibly even be a sequel to All Out War, although who knows? These people are set on finding what our folks are hiding, and they will find it, as these situations typically go. Negan will toss a sob story about being misunderstood and that's all she wrote. I'm sure there will be some kind of crazy twist, though, and that's why I love you guys so much and continue to buy your books even through the slower parts of the story.

Negan totally tried that, but Magna's got a pretty good bullshit detector.

Slower parts of the--?! Why I oughta!

Keep up the amazing work, gentlemen...you may just keep me around a while. Also...you know...I bet if you played your cards right, The Walking Dead would make a HELL of a TV show...

Lonnie Henderson II
Lafayette, GA

A TV show you say... man... could you imagine that?!

To the Kirkman Krew:

Why do I get the feeling that once Carl moved to Hilltop, he won't be seeing Rick again for a very long time? Also, back in the All Out War days, two years had passed since the outbreak, right? I don't remember that being mentioned in any issue, it was probably somewhere else. Care to clarify when the two-year mark was?

Thanks.
Graham

Since Hacks answers are totally not continuity, as previously established, I'd estimate that not long after the events of AOW, two years had elapsed.

Dear Mr. Kirkman, Mr. Adlard, et. al,

Long time listener, first time caller.

You know, during All Out War, what really hit me was that I felt genuine tension when I was reading those issues. I couldn't predict what was gonna happen, and I was really worried for the various characters. When Rick got shot with the bolt it was like, FUUUCK!!!

So with the new group we've met recently, I'm looking forward to seeing how things play out. I like how they are kind of doing the same thing that Rick and company did when they first came to Alexandria. Are they going to find Negan and set him free, I wonder. I'm sure it will play out differently than I expect.

Negan and Carl's relationship is interesting. Negan seems genuinely hurt that Carl still wants to kill him. He's a complex character, with shades of gray and different aspects to his personality. He even had a certain understanding and empathy for the girl that Carl liked. But is he manipulating Carl in addition to being his "friend"? Guess we'll have to wait and see...

Will he manipulate the new group when/if they find

him? Hmm...

Speaking of Negan, the thing I keep coming back to is his speech, "the best way to a man's heart is through his vagina." That has to be one of the best villain monologs of all time!

That bit has a secret origin that maybe we'll discuss sometime. Or if we're asked nicely.

Nah. I'm not telling. The vague answer is that I'd originally come up with that speech for a villain in a different book... but then I realized how Negan-ish it was.

Questions.

1. Are there dentists in Alexandria, Hilltop, Kingdom??? Is anybody growing poppies to make laudinum, morphine or other painkillers? Does Eugene have that figured out too??? What's going on with Rosita? (don't answer that one.)

Heh. Stay tuned on all fronts.

Because, man, if there was a zombie apocalypse, I would be scrounging for dental floss. I wouldn't want to have a cavity 10 years down the line and no way to fix it...

2. Where's Michonne??? It was only a few hours after reading 126 it occurred to me, no Michonne. (OK, don't answer that one either!)

We know where she is. And soon you will, too.

3. Can we keep to a 3 week production schedule? I got spoiled with AOW, and I don't want to have to go back to once a month. TWD is just too good...

NO!

2015!

Keep up the great work!!!!
Jack Musick
Hilo, Hawaii

PS. If you print this and I have made any spelling errors, please correct them so I don't look like an asshole. Peace!

You did a good job, buddy. Exemplary work.

How's it going there tough guys?

First of all I have to thank you for turning me into a total walking dead fan boy...I love everything about it from the T.V. show to the comic book to the video game to the books, I've read rise of the governor, I'll be catching up on the rest soon.

My big question is about Jesus or more about his relation to the T.V. show. First of all I am really happy about your portrayal of gay characters, I'm gay myself and also don't really fit into any typical gay stereotypes and I have to say it is totally refreshing to finally see gay characters in the media that aren't just stereotypes, the walking dead and shameless are the two things that come to mind when it comes to portraying gay characters properly and you should be pretty happy about that and I'm sure I'm not the only one who truly appreciates that. I also like that you decided to not make Jesus' orientation a central part of his character, orientation isn't the central part of any person so it is as it should be. So here is my question, Jesus was an all-around bad ass that turned out to be gay which shocked most of us until you look back and notice that nothing at all indicated he was straight to begin with, and one

character is in exactly the same position on the T.V. show...Daryl.

I have... fantasized about having this discussion.

Absolutely nothing has given any indication that Daryl is straight and the relationship between him and Carol makes it seem even more likely that he is not only gay but that Carol is probably the only person he has confided in so far, and I feel like little hints have been dropped about it as well along the way but maybe not. I thought of this a long time ago but now I am pretty certain of it after the most bad ass character in the comic book turned out to be gay. I feel like if you had your way that Daryl would turn out to be gay since it's true to the comic book and makes total sense for his character. So the real question is, would AMC let that fly?

For the record, they absolutely would.

I think it would be awesome to make Daryl gay but I could also see extremely heavy resistance from AMC at the idea for fear of losing ratings and fear of fan backlash. The walking dead T.V. show is known for being unconventional but Daryl being gay sounds like a whole new level of unconventional even by the standards of T.V. today. Basically I am asking how much control you actually have over the Walking Dead T.V. show and if Daryl being gay is an idea that AMC wouldn't flinch at? Is Daryl being gay even an idea you have considered and if AMC shot the idea down would you at least let us know what you originally intended for his character?

I am aware that this could have heavy spoilers for the T.V. show in answering these questions so I understand if this doesn't get published in the letter hacks but it would totally make my day to see this in the letter hacks two months from now.

Long fucking live lucking Negan,
Nick Muller
Worcester, Massachusetts

All I can say is that it's been discussed. We have very specific ideas about Daryl's sexuality (or the seeming lack thereof), and if there's ever a quiet period in the show where he's not constantly distracted by crossbowing... we'll tackle it in the show.

P.S. If Daryl dies, I will not riot. I know people love Daryl but I think everyone forgot the fact that the first two episodes don't even feature Daryl and everyone loved those episodes too.

There have been other episodes that didn't feature Daryl at all later in the series, but make no mistake, if he dies... there will be plenty of rioters.

That's all we have time for. See you next month, where "A Journey Begins." Man, I don't have to spoil nothing if I just keep using the story titles. Robert's doing my work for me!

-Second Best Sean

I'm doing what I can to make things easier after that grueling All Out War schedule you had to deal with. Did we mention we're doing two issues on October? Things are about to get pretty crazy... so stay tuned!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

While a lot of you are probably also wondering “Where is Michonne?”, isn’t it great to see Carl happy? Glad things are working out for that young man. As opposed to newcomer Dante, who looks like he’s about to eat a shit sandwich.

Dear Kirkman and friends,

First, the good stuff. All Out War was great, truly great. I love how the world continues to grow and mature. As bleak as this series can be, there are real moments of hope, too. Charlie, man, you are stunning. Your artwork continues to amaze and delight even when you’re working a biweekly schedule.

But now, the bad stuff. I should have seen this coming. The bad guy convinces new people that the good guys are bad guys. That’s a story I’ve seen way, way too many times. Please, guys, please tell me you’re not about to walk headfirst into a hackneyed, cliché plot twist like that one. You guys are too good to just play that one straight. Please tell me that there’s gonna be a twist, hopefully something totally unexpected.

Now, don’t get me wrong. I’m not about to drop a book as spectacular as this one. I’m not even mad, hell, I’m not even disappointed. I will be if this ends up as obvious as it looks, but I trust you guys. After reading the whole back catalog of issues I trust that you guys are gonna surprise me or subvert my expectations on this one. And even if you don’t, well, one eyerolling cliché isn’t gonna make me drop the book. Anyway, thanks for reading and keep those issues coming!

Sincerely,

Jeff

#130 really hit a button, with people expecting the story to bob when we were really weaving (or whatever...). It was the semi-annual “jump to conclusions” letter writing campaign. Thank you, Jeff, for writing one of the more balanced letters. We ain’t mad at cha!

Glad we dodged that bullet. WHEW!

Where the fuck is Lucille MOTHER FUCKERS?

Eloquently yours,
Ryan Szoldatits
Toronto, Canada

I don’t know. Where the fuck IS Lucille?

All in due time... Lucille’s location will be revealed... later.

Kirkman, et. al.,

Just read 128, and I gotta say my skepticism of a post-AOW storyline has been muzzled. I am enjoying the new character arcs and the remaining uncertainty amidst a seeming utopia.

Two things:
(#1) Some people probably lost their shit when Rick snapped out and thumped Border-patrol Benjamin.

But coming from a guy who works in a high-risk, pay-the-

fuck-attention job that safeguards somebody’s life, let me say sticks work better than carrots. Frequently.

In the end, Benjamin will be thankful for the beating handed to him by the R.G. for bringing him to his senses.... Either that, or he’ll let Negan out, and try to exact some kind of retribution (didn’t know Spencer, eh?) and burn everything to the ground.

Also (#2), in 127... That exchange between Rick and Eugene, Rick remarks Eugene is ‘too valuable’ for herding... Is there a caste system developing, or is Rick just stating Eugene is like Montag in Fahrenheit 451 -the last surviving Gospel of Matthew?

You guys are great, and I hope Negan gets a crowbar in the face,

Justin
Lebanon, Pa

There’s no defined caste system just yet. Rick was just remarking that Eugene, who is kind of their expert on figuring things out and reestablishing civilization... shouldn’t be putting himself at risk.

Charlie Adlard is an illustrating master, how many others could use a whole 2 pages (p8-9 issue 129), covering just 6 words of script, and tell me so much about the groups journey since two years has passed. The horse and cart lifestyle, the new look Rick and Carl, the improved defenses, fixed gate and even the windmill in the distance all setting a scene im sure even you genius scriptwriters wouldnt have envisaged when you wrote the words...“whose your girlfriend?”...“shut up dad”

While there’s only six words of dialogue, Robert wrote 175 words to describe the scene. So, envisage it he did. And I’d say you’d learn more about Robert’s writing process if THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR ever came out... but, you know...

Wow... way to throw me under the bus. But seriously, folks. I’m not just writing dialogue here. My script gets MIGHTY sparse at times and I lean on Charlie a LOT because we know each other’s talents quite well, and I know what I can saddle him with... but I think if I sent him a blank script with just dialogue... he’d kill me. That said... I’m tempted to try.

Charlie I salute you! Please continue to amaze me with your visuals of this world Ive come to love!

And please have Negan escape soon!...just dont be tempted to make his return many arcs later like the delay of the return of Merl in the tv series (good when it finally came but could have made series 2 sooo much better!)...i just cant wait to see what Negans vengeance will look like!!

Big fan from the UK
Tony Mannix
Nottinghamshire

How shocked would readers be if Negan... never escaped?

Well, Kirkman, you’ve finally done it. I’ve been a supporter and a defender of yours for years now. People were pissed about you killing Glen and I defended the decision. People bitched that Negan was just a Governor ripoff and I argued and argued that they were wrong. Even as recently as the

ending of All Out War, I said “it’s fine, I bet he has a good plan.”

And now it looks like you’re just going to tell the same goddamn story with these new survivors that you did when Rick & company first got to Alexandria. I’m hoping against hope that I’m wrong, that Rick or SOMEONE will be able to be like “no, you idiots, we’re not hiding anything, we’re rebuilding” and there won’t be some sneaky goings-on. But if they fucking let Negan out and he convinces them that Rick and LITERALLY A WHOLE SOCIETY is evil, I’m so over it. If this gets printed, I’m sure it won’t be until 2 issues after I’m proven wrong and you and Sean can just be like “HA, you fucking idiot!” But it’s aiming and aiming at “Negan gets out & the new survivors turn against the community.”

You’d better not let me down Kirkman!! I’m watching you.

Justin Smith
Charlotte NC

“HA, you fucking idiot!” ...I couldn’t imagine a better response.

No comment.

Hi all!

My name is Alexandra. I live in Russia in small village Shekshema. Here we have nothing like the comics and it’s sad. I always thought that if the first experience from something positive, you’ll love it forever. After reading The Walking Dead, I realized that this experience more than the positive. I fell in love with your comics! I read it days and nights. And even my mother reads TWD, although she had never been a fan of such genre. So thank you very much for your work, which brings me, and not only to me so many joy.

P.S. I am also delighted with the TV show, it’s my favorite of all that I saw. I can not wait for the new season)

P.P.S. Sorry for bad English

Sasha Solnceva
Shekshema, Russia

The Walking Dead: Russian mother approved! Thanks for the support, Sasha!

Hacks,

I’ve been reading religiously since I picked up the first two trades at Book Expo America in 2005, and I’ve loved every minute of it. First there was a long cycle of waiting 6 months in anticipation for the trades, buying them the day they came out, and reading them before the day was over. I’ve gone digital now, and repeat that process each month with the issues. I’ve loved every minute of the show, I’ve loved the pacing, and I’ve loved seeing a different story than the books. Ten years with no complaints is a pretty good track record.

It’s been more than two years though, and I’m ready to move on. When Glen died, I read that issue 5 times in a row because I couldn’t believe what I was reading. I watched in disbelief as Abraham, my favorite character since Tyreese, was killed without a fight. I was white-knuckled for “All Out War.” It was all amazing. Negan was a great villain, he made the Governor look like a pre-school teacher.

It’s time to move on though. After all the hype that his story was coming to an end, we’re back in his story the very next issue. The characters have gone (undetermined) years without seeing him, but the readers don’t have any break. And he’s back the following issue... and he’s back the following issue... and he’s sure to be back next issue. The book isn’t called “The Walking Negan.” Get to the next story, please!

Paul Juser
Brooklyn, NY

I think it’s pretty clear at this point that the story, for now at least, is very much NOT focused on Negan. He’ll be around, sure... but we are in a sense, moving on.

Look at us, pleasing fans left and right this month! Feels good to do that for a change... maybe Michonne isn’t dead after all.

Hey Kirkman,

I just finished reading issue #127 and all I have to say is that Rick did a great job rebuilding Alexandria. In fact so great,

that guess what it was placed just outside his doorstep:

A fucking pigsty!

Enjoy your stay in Alexandria Rick with your lover/older men aficionado Andrea, your psychopathic teenager son and the hog farm stink! And fucking fucker Negan!

Yannis Takis,
Karpenissi, Greece

Great point, Yannis... But after years of rotting corpses, I’d imagine pig shit wouldn’t smell as bad.

I definitely think that people’s sense of smell in this world would be acclimated to some pretty terrible things by now.

Dear Fuckers,

I was a little fucking bored today so I counted how many fucking times Negan swears (upto and fucking including Issue 129). 534 motherfucking times.

He says “fuck” - or derivatives of - 432 times, with “shit” - making up 50 of the others. Here’s a fucking breakdown, cos numbers are absofuckinglutely cool:

- Fucking 253
- Fuck 107
- Shit 44
- Motherfucking 20
- Dick 17
- Fucked 9
- Fuckers 9
- Bitch 8
- Fucks 8
- Asshole 7
- Fucker 5
- Piss 5
- Motherfuckers 4
- Fuck’s Sake 3
- Motherfucker 3
- Pussy 3
- Absofuckinglutely 2
- Assholes 2
- Cocksucking 2
- Cunt 2
- Motherfuck 2
- Pricks 2
- Shitting 2
- Bastard 1
- Bullshit 1
- Fucked-Up 1
- Fuckedy 1
- Fuckhead 1
- Fuckity 1
- Fuckless 1
- Infuckinghuman 1
- Pissed 1
- Prick 1
- Pussies 1
- Shitheads 1
- Shittier 1
- Shitty 1
- What-The-Fuck-Ever 1

I hope you print this, it would make my fucking day.

Cheers wankers,

Grayson S.
Winchester, UK

Great work, Grayson! You’ve just made all the Walking Dead statheads cream themselves.

Shit... Negan needs to swear more.

Don’t forget, we got two issues coming next month! And the next one’s so surprising, you’ll be glad the following one isn’t so far behind. We’re also headed to New York Comic Con in October. See you there!

-Sean Mackiewicz

And for the record... I was joking about the book being weekly in 2015. That would be IMPOSSIBLE. Wouldn’t it, guys? Or would it? Sean? Charlie? What do you say?

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Shit... what a revolting development. I was really starting to like that Dante guy, too.

Who are these people... this is crazy!

Mr. Kirkman:

Really? You finally give us a survivor group with a female leader, and she's not only L'Oreal pretty but apparently entirely controlled by her emotions and is going to be the one who brings down the communities by investing herself in the Big Bad from the last story arc and letting him free?

Nice.

Gabe C.

Stay tuned next month for JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS!

Yeah... no kidding.

Dear Kirkman & Crew,

At the time of reading "There were whispers and I was afraid"(really loving that all the issues of Walking Dead and Outcast have names), I think I've now finally warmed up to this change of pace. All Out War was exhilarating, so it was a bit of a shock to go to an admittedly slower pace, excluding the stuff with Marco and Ken. However, I'm really liking this whole new story line. Of course, something I'd really love to see are the other two communities(The Kingdom and Sanctuary), and check up on some characters we haven't seen, but I know it's coming, and I'm going to be patient.

GOOD.

Keep being patient...

First off, I'm glad that Magna was smart enough to see through Negan. Her bullshit-detector seems to be one to rival Pete's (yay TTG's Walking Dead references). I'm almost glad that that wasn't the way the next story-arc was going to play out, it was what everyone expected. These whispers though... I'm not sure anyone would have expected that. Even after the cover was released, how many people thought it was going to be actual whispers?

I'd like to see more of Ken and Marco, and not have them be completely forgotten after this is over. Even though we don't know much about them, just seeing how determined Marco was to save his friend shows he has the makings of a greatly interesting character.

The Hilltop doesn't look much changed, unlike Alexandria. Just, something I noticed. When everyone was obsessing over Rick being at the Hilltop, I just kept laughing. I mean, it makes sense in a way, but it's still very funny. And an explanation to Rick's horrible, awful character design. Just... No, I'm not going to get used to him looking like that.

Yes, you will. It took me 6 issues, but I'm there. While I wouldn't go as far as calling it "horrible, awful"... it's just not what I was expecting... and Rick was looking for some anonymity, too. Also, very few dads have style.

You will all love RICK'S LOOK! DAMN IT!

We got references to Sophia and Gregory, but didn't see them. If I had to estimate, I'm saying it's going to be another 7-8 issues until we learned everyone's fate. Well, maybe less. Can you tell me if I'm at least close?

Everyone's fate? Not close.

All in all, this issue was great, and I can't wait for what comes next. The fair, the communities, and those whispers... I'm going to take a guess and say that they're definite bad news. Hey, maybe Rick and Negan can unite to fight a common enemy or something? That'd be really cool.

Keep up the great work

Lucas
Albertson
Buffalo, NY

Maybe that would be cool... or just really, really weird.

Hey guys,

I just have to thank you for the entire TWD franchise. It all started for me with the show. All my friends and I would get together for S.N.T. (Sunday Night Tradition) and eagerly await!! Once season 4 ended I felt a loss in my life so I purchased the first two compendiums, all the volumes that fell after, and the individual comics. I'm all caught up and I was just rereading Issue 129 before I pick up 130 (which is out today!!!). I really enjoy how well written and illustrated the comic is. I have never read comics before and am in love. The creative ways that you come up with to survive or war tactics always awe me (weapons in walker filth!!). The games are good as fuck too-omg. I got my boyfriend sucked into all the comics and show too!! I love all of it! You guys are fucking awesome. And I hope Negan gets out today..... He he he... Also, why did Andrea have to suck so much in the show? :(

Samantha Savory

I love hearing stories like this, of readers coming from the TV show (or wherever, Telltale, etc.) and then word of mouth and sharing the books gets the ball rolling. You're like human dung beetles, rolling the giant ball of shit uphill until it's even bigger. But like, it's not a bad thing, because dung beetles LOVE shit.

Telltale should use "The games are good as fuck" as a promotional pull quote. You reading this, Telltale?

Dear Captain Kirkman

Just read issue #130 and all I have to say is THANK YOU!

Whether we've actually entered the DAY OF THE DEAD stage of your book remains to be scene but I for one would love to see some walkin talkin Eds.

I watched DAY OF THE DEAD recently and man, that's like reading Stan Lee comics from the '60s. The game's just evolved so much since then. Some amazing gore though...

Mackiewicz... them's fighting words!

Maybe it turns out to be some regular dudes using dead goop as a cover and the dead are not the ones whispering which would be fine but I'm totaling willing to buy the concept of "talkers."

I'll have to go through the all of previous LETTER HACKS to prove it but I think during ALL OUT WAR one of you teased we would see some wild shit in this issue specifically.

This only proves that you guys don't listen to us.

I think when I was writing ALL OUT WAR I didn't know what was going to happen in "this issue specifically." I knew where we'd be, roughly... but not exactly how it broke into issues yet. So that's impossible.

Maybe I'm wrong but I can't wait to read everyone else's reaction to this - especially the negative ones - especially if it turns out to be a fake out.

Ahron Reinhard
Silver Spring, MD

It wasn't entirely a fake out... right?

I must admit... I thought the response to the possibility of talking zombies would be much more negative. "I" certainly wouldn't have thought that was a good idea for this book.

I know you guys probably got like, a trillion of these to wade through, but here goes. I HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THIS

FRANCHISE. I love what you guys do. The twists and storytelling are phenomenal, and I have one question. In issue #130 Robert said you were doing an issue a week in 2015. I have a feeling it was sarcasm, but could you please make it happen? I swear I'd give my left nut for that.

Keep it up,
Will Kirk

I'm only printing this because this topic is gaining steam and I am SHUTTING IT DOWN. 52 issues is an IMPOSSIBILITY. Give up all hope.

Yeah, that was officially... definitively sarcasm. 52 issues in one year is impossible. OR IS IT? STAY TUNED! (Don't... I'm totally kidding.) [Or am I?] {How many times have I done this bracket joke at this point?} <Not enough.>

Dear TWD,

I don't know how many letters you guys typically get with each issue, but I imagine you must have received a shitstorm of letters after issue 130. Talking walkers? I can't believe it, and I'm trying to think of all the reasons why they were heard whispering.

Plausible reasons:

1. There are people walking among them, similar to what Michonne used to do.

Ding! Ding! Ding!

Implausible reasons:

1. Everything else.

Exactly.

I mean, did they learn how to talk? Have the aliens you guys used to hint at finally arrived? Have the whispering voices from LOST made their way to the USA? Have you guys completely lost your minds?

Can't wait to see what happens next, and I'm holding you to weekly issues in 2015. If you guys are crazy enough to give us talking walkers, you're surely crazy enough to give us weekly issues, right?

Shut up.

Eric in Venezuela

Sean, be nice or we WILL do weekly issues next year!

I think Charlie's on MY side here.

Dearest Rob & Sean & Charlie & Stefano & Cliff & Rus & Dave (whew!),

First, thank you all for doing such an awesome job day in and day out. Now, time to bitch.. (j/k)

1.Why did you guys decide to make the cover wording so damn small? Is this "THE WALKING DEAD" or "the walking dead"(excuse me)? I almost passed it up today at the shop!(Collectors Authority shoutout). The new style just looks so wimpy and I'm not a fan of the cover spoiling what happens inside. You could've at least let us think the whispers were from Ken and Marco for a few pages and then give us the reveal at the end!

Story titles are not spoilers. Do people complain about TV episode titles, too? Or song titles? In an ideal world they function as a tease, a primer for what you're about to get your eyeballs in.

Yeah, that title could mean anything... how is that a spoiler?

2.You are such a tease! You make us think that the new group is going to break Negan out, but then they leave within the first 3 pages! C'mon, free Negan! Shit needs to be stirred up!

You're abusing the numbering system. This isn't a question.

3. Is it me or has not one baby been born in the entirety of the series besides Judith and Hershel? I mean did the group stock up on Trojans, practice abstinence (haha not likely) , or is there a secret hospital somewhere? Someone like Gene would realize that you can only go without a new generation for so long..

Maybe they just wisened up to the practicality and fun of the withdrawal method.

Plenty of babies born at the Hilltop, possibly at The Kingdom as well. Our group were pretty preoccupied most of the time.

4. If the Dead can now speak, wouldn't this be, as the Chinese say, jumping the shark? I really hope this is just misdirection from Marco and it was really someone like Possible Spoiler Alert: Michonne and Ezekiel, who now command an army of dead?

The Chinese absolutely don't say that. That's ridiculous. But not as ridiculous as suggesting that Michonne & Ezekiel command an army of the dead. RIDICULOUS.

5. I asked last time if Rosa was pregnant, and I didn't get printed (wah!). So can I assume if I ask "is Rick the father of this child?", I will receive a similar response? Or am I on to something here?

No clue, bro. I think you're trying to out Shaw Shaw, but more ridiculousness.

6. You said in one issue that Rick would die eventually, but I'm calling your bluff because he's your Bruce Wayne. When we think The Walking Dead, we think of Rick first. Unlike Bats, he can't come back after he dies. So who can lead/carry this book after he passes? I know you'll say Carl, but really?

Michonne. And her army of the fucking dead, apparently.

Rick Grimes is not Bruce Wayne.

Well, that's it, I know I'm complaining a lot but it's because I love the series. I haven't cared about a book this much since Preacher! I hope that it wraps up before we all die because every great work needs an end, that's what makes them great. I don't want you to close up shop tomorrow, but I'd like to finish the series in 20-30 years as a grandfather. I started reading in 2007 before I had any kids at all, now I have two sons Ethan and Zachary. I think it would be pretty cool to introduce my future grandsons to your work.

Oh, you like PREACHER?! All's forgiven! But please wait some time before you let your sons read that.

Thank you for all the creativity, words, art, color, and especially editing,

Paul Rocco

I know I talk a lot about this series going on forever... but I don't think 30 more years is feasible. Or hell, maybe it is. It really doesn't feel like it's been 12 years already (is that because it's still only been 11?)

Dear Cpt. Kirk and Crew,

Once again, congrats at making a spectacular comic book series with engaging characters, such a deep story, and wonderful art. I look forward to indulging myself in the story every month. So, I have a few questions-

1) Back in issue 125, Rick calls Negan "the absolute stupidest person still alive." Now I'm guessing that stupidest was in there for one of three reasons- 1) just a typo, 2) to show how civilization has either forgotten proper grammar or no longer cares, 3) because you (Robert) watches Trailer Park Boys and wanted to do a "Rickyism" with Rick. I hope it's the last option :).

"Stupidest" is what you're going to bust our balls about?! Is there no accounting for the poetry in modern English? Most dialogue—and anything reflecting dialect—ignores a ton of wonky grammar.

Yeah, people don't always speak with perfect grammar... it annoys me when people don't get this. Even the smartest people in the world flub up sometimes.

2) Zombies talking now? I guess with TWD it's possible, but IDK. Marco is most likely not crazy, because Charlie made it pretty obvious (with his art) that Marco and Ken looked up at the same time because they heard something. But I guess it's possible that Ken heard something else and Marco processed it as words. But I'm more likely to believe that scouts (or hunters) from another group were employing the tried and true tactic of covering themselves in zombie guts to blend in with the Walkers, albeit the fact that it was raining, so maybe they found another way to blend in (or keep zombie guts on in the rain). Am I on to something?

Close. But not exactly.

3) Why don't the communities find a bunch of empty pop cans, fill them with gravel, and run a line through them and use that to make a perimeter around the road (like the groups put around their camps in the TV show)?

Around all the road? When no one is there to hear them most of the time? Each rider monitors a few miles. A string of cans like that would be useless.

4) Everyone is wondering where Michone is. I think she's with Ezekiel (as more than a freind) and Shiva the giraffe in the Kingdom. Possible?

As Kevin Garnett once shouted from the top of his lungs, "ANYTHING'S POSSIBBBBBBBLLLLLE!

Thanks a lot for reading my letter and lots of props to everyone in TWD team. I understand if you publish this and don't give a straight answer on some of the questions to avoid possible spoilers (PLEASE DON'T STOP!!!!!!!!!!(EVER!!!!!!!!!!)).

Noah Jacobs
Fruitport, Michigan

Next month... fuck that! In TWO WEEKS we pick back up to discover some crazy ass shit. And I guess that AMC TV thing is back on air this week, so enjoy that, too. I guess.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Hey! Season 5 starts this week? It's honestly going to be great. Very cool stuff ahead... you'll see. You should all be very excited. And another issue in two weeks! Cool!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey, we just did two issues this month! It's almost like we knew #132 would be so crazy, we'd have to get #133 in rotation a lot quicker.

Heh! And this issue barely follows up on the events of 132! We rock! But seriously... we should all be worried about Jesus... these "Whisperers" are no joke!

But enough teasing... LETTERS!

I know that Marco isn't crazy and he really was hearing whispers coming from within the horde. But I also know that the dead aren't talking and this is a new group of crazies. I also know these crazies are lead by Michonne. I also know you won't print this because you answer these letters two issues later and that's probably too soon to spoil this reveal, unless I'm wrong then Sean can just go "HA! You fucking idiot!"

That would be too easy. Turns out, you're only half of a fucking idiot. I am, too.

It would be pretty damn strange if Michonne was leading these people...

Despite being a Negan fanboy, I'm okay with him being in jail (I kinda do expect him to "die behind those bars"), I think some impressive character development can be made in there alone.

As a Eugene fan though, Negan getting Rosita pregnant is pretty fucked up. Thanks for my signed copy of #121 for my fanboy rant on both of them.

Ethan Tompkins
Williamsport, PA

Ha! I see what you did there. Negan and Rosita have had next to no contact... promise.

Hey guys. My name is Erica and I'm a high school English teacher in West Virginia. I had a student this year named Ben. Ben passed away very suddenly a couple of weeks into the school year. Even though we didn't have much time with him, he made a huge impact on me and on our school. He was extremely kind and helpful, and he always sought me out each day to discuss some new fact or idea he had about The Walking Dead. He loved everything about TWD and happily discussed the show, the comics and the game with me.

After he passed, I asked my students to write letters to express their condolences to his family. Almost every letter mentioned how much he loved TWD and how he loved to talk about the next edition of the comic, Episode 2 of the game, and the new season on TV.

Ben's family elected not to have a memorial service, and I must admit that my students and I are having some trouble with a lack of closure. Even though he wasn't part of our school community for long, we want the world to know that he was here and that he mattered to us. Since he loved your work so much, it would mean the world to us if you could mention him in the Letter Hacks.

RIP Ben, you left us too soon.

Sorry to hear about Ben. I lost a teacher in 8th grade and a good friend in 9th, and yeah... that sort of stuff is never easy. All the best to you, your class and his family.

It's always wonderful to hear about TWD being a big part of anyone's life. Thank you so much for sharing. I'm very sorry to hear about this tragedy. I wish you and all your students well in these difficult times. As a father of two I cannot comprehend what it would be like to lose a child. My condolences to the family.

Kirkmainia and Mackdaddiewicz,

I spy in issue 131...another fucking butt crack. Is that Adlard with the BC addiction or do one of you bribe him to slide one in there

randomly? The world needs to know. What's the crack count up to these days? Gotta be flirting with triple digits at this point. Anyway...keep up the great work, men. Even if that means more gratuitous butt crack shots. Keep writing and I'll keep reading.

Jared
Gainesville FL

Charlie has a serious crack problem. It's been a real bummer trying to keep that on the low. But it's a relief finally get that out in the open.

Next issue we should try to run a comment from Charlie on these butt cracks. That'll make him love us... and America that much more.

Dear Kirkman and Ko from the almost-un-United Kingdom.

This'll be a tough letter to write and a tough one to read, I'm sure.

Last issue was somewhat of a let down.

I understand the need for character and world development, and it was done spectacularly between the #20-ish to #60 somewhere. The prison arc was insane. Sadly, things seem to have gotten stale. And it's like you feel guilty for 'wasting' issues on world development, so chuck in a bit of 'action' in the last couple pages. Recently, the 'twist' was that Carl was talking to Negan in the cellar. Issue before that it was "THE DEADS BE TALKIN'" and this issue gone it was "NOW YOU D'INTERROGATED!" whereas the rest of the issues were "look at this new world". Nothing substantial came of the 'action twists', and personally, the world development is getting stale. As Rick et al. and their home stabilize in a kind of 'in-to-the-sunset' manner, so I am riding into the sunset. I think it is my time to leave.

It may be because I've been with TWD since around the late #20s and have seen so many worlds built and crushed and rebuilt that it's left me an old and disillusioned man. And my time may be coming to an end...

I want to thank you, Kirkman, Adlard, Rathburn, the baby Gaudiano, Wooton, the late Sina Grace, Sean Mackiewicz; for dragging me into the comic book world amidst rotting child-zombies... Babies popped by bullets in the mother's arms... the beheading and rape of farmer's children... you know, the usual. And I'd like to thank you for providing evening after lonely evening of cosy comfort and entertainment. For taking me on an amazing journey through all kinds of surprising emotions, with characters I never expected to care so much about. I think my time is near... (I'll be buying the next few issues in hope to see this letter though, so not that near)

Yay! A few more issues of sales!

(and don't worry Kirkman, I'm now fangirling after Outcast, so far it may have re-animated my twisted corpse)

Whew!

All the love and thanks I have,

Here's to the years we spent together

In death – Caradoc Gibson

I thought about holding off printing this letter for a couple more issues, just so you'd keep buying them and seeing what we have in store and hoping to hook you, but you know, buying 100+ issues of any comic is a serious commitment, and we thank you for that. We'll be here if you decide to come back.

And hey! Hopefully recent events may sway you to stick around for a while longer... who knows. Thanks so much for the support over the years, and if you do read up to this current issue, please write in again and let us know if you changed your mind.

Who knows... we might be able to print letters from you regularly for the sole purpose of retaining a reader... this plan may just work!

Kirkomania Society,

Aren't you really just killing time between now and the next Governor/ Negan character? Thought I'd start off with that. TWD #131! New characters abound, for sure. Really though, I can't believe how quickly and easily Maggie dismissed the idea of the dead talking! It cast, or could have cast, a pall over the entire issue. No, clearly the dead didn't have much to say This issue, but given a chance, I think Marco was right on the money!! And that changes everything. If the dead, as I guess we're calling them now--(thanks, Marco)--are indeed speaking, then their intelligent again, or semi-intelligent at least. Or evolving. Or...becoming Full Humans again?!! Yep: Changes everything.

Knowing these things are pretty much just reanimated meat, and having spent years around them at this point, I feel Maggie's reaction was reasonable.

Another thing I noticed: Between TWD #131 and Invincible #114, you never give us what's on the covers. Carl and his welder friend working on the 131 cover, didn't happen. And that goes double for the Invincible cover, where skeletons, skulls and a bashed-in Robot head were all absent! Kinda like Invincible #100, there was little to no action at all. These are still the greatest comics around, really; Walking Dead moreso cause you put more into it and it has a better concept and feel. Sophia is the daughter of Maggie and Glenn, right? Biologically, or...? Sorry, it's been a while. I'm pretty sure Carl and Rick are not blood relatives, but it's been even longer. So, have you read "Imperial" by that Seagle guy? And do you think it's a ripoff of Invincible? I think I know the answer.

Cheers,

Andrew J. Shaw

Seagle is an extremely talented writer who could frankly teach me a thing or two about writing. I haven't seen Imperial but I don't have to in order to be able to definitively say that it is NOT a ripoff of Invincible.

As to the cover comment... I feel a striking cover is more important than an accurate one. AND a surprise, ANY surprise, especially a big one, is more important than a cover that reflects the interior story.

SOMETIMES it's possible to tease an issue's events without spoiling them on a cover and accomplish a striking, cool cover... when it's not... we just try to do something cool.

I feel it's better for you guys NOT to know what's going to happen inside these comics... so more often than not... the covers are LIES.

Dear Mind Blowers,

Love the comic. Love it so much I'm actually emailing you to say I LOVE IT! However I Have one teeny tiny criticism of issue 31, page 8. I know things have been starting to look rosier in the last 5 issues but surely if the survivors are cooking up 13 plus roast chickens for dinner three times a week it isn't going to be long until there's no bloody chickens left. Surely live chickens laying lots of edible eggs would be the more long sited view with the livestock? This would never happen if Rick was in charge over there. Seriously though this is just the best stuff Ive ever read in this medium. Incredibly gripping and moving. Wonderful work.

regards
Chris Sandalls

Doing some internet sleuthing—and I'm half an idiot, mind you—it takes 3 weeks to incubate a chicken egg, then 6 months for it to grow to edible (4-5 lbs.) size. So when you factor in population size and the amount of time passed in getting the community to where it is now, throw in some math (I'm not going to show you all the work), and well, chickens mature quickly and are pretty sustainable, and there's a lot of chicken available right now, so that's what's for dinner.

Yeah, it's very practical to keep enough chickens to have a sustainable population... but that's a lot of chickens... that's why you see them running around all the time.

Robert,

In Walking Dead #129 or 130 letters column you quickly dismissed the long term survivability of people at sea, I disagree with your belief. I am the Chief Mate (2nd in command to the Captain) on an oil tanker working in the Gulf of Mexico. We have a crew of four deck officers: Master/Captain, Chief Mate, Second Mate and Third Mate; three engineers: Chief engineer, 1st Assist Engineer (in hierarchy he is comparable to the Chief Mate only for the engineering side) and a 2nd Assistant engineer; a steward who acts as our cook, and three Able bodied Seaman (all four of these individuals are the unlicensed personnel whilst the engineers and deck officers are licensed personnel). We carry the medium distillates: mogas (regular and premium), avgas (for non jet turbine

aircraft), ULSD (ultra low sulfur diesel) & Jet-A (for Jet engines) and our vessel burns HFO (Heavy Fuel Oil) and MDO (Marine Diesel Oil) for bunkers or fuel, more MDO now due to sulfur emission standards (ULSD is similar and can be used by the vessel). As is normal on board we have to be prepared for many situations as we have no else to rely on; we are training in shipboard fire fighting, damage control from collision or grounding to prevent sinking and have been training in medical response (not all onboard but all senior deck officers). In addition, we train for security incidents such as bomb threat, stowaway search or any other possibility we think of for the month's drills.

Often while anchored we will fish and usually do well enough, and this is with a couple of fishing rods in the water. We have capacity for freezing food stores and generally keep a month or two supply on board. The vessel is also equipped with a fast rescue boat (a 25 ft opened motor boat with one outboard). To say that long term survivability at sea isn't possible is foolish. Let's just throw out a scenario.

Say our vessel just loaded a mix of fuel (the important part is say we just loaded at least two cargo tanks with ULSD 30,000 bbl or 3,400 MT), the vessel has not max capacity of bunkers but say roughly 300 MT HFO and 100 MT MDO onboard. At full sea speed the vessel burns 30 MTs a day, but if we arrived at our discharge port (often Tampa which is only 28 hours underway at sea from our load port) and found the port is shutdown do to the fact there are no pilots, tugs or line handlers available possible due to traffic jams due to the early stages of the outbreak we would anchor roughly 12 miles (nautical not statute) offshore in the vicinity of channel and not far from Egmont or Mullet keys (both situated seaward of the Sunshine Sky Bridge.

When not underway using the main engines fuel consumption is minimum possibly 2 MTs per day (remember that although the vessel has only has say 270 MT HFO and 99 MT if MDO that if the situation became clear that society had fallen we could tape into the 3,400 MT stowed in our cargo tanks - also Jet-A is basically kerosene so in the event we chose to reduce electrical output we could use the Jet for lighting lanterns which could easily be fashioned on board.

As for food, in the event we saw a massive break down of society leaving ourselves confined to the vessel for an unknown period of time we would first restrict water consumption (although we have the capability to make our own water on board via our evaporators this requires burning fuel). Next we would start with rationing food. Now obviously these are practices that we have considered, but not for the zombie apocalypse but say if there were another terrorist attack (as that shutdown the port of New York/New Jersey for some time after 9/11), or a biological/chemical/ radiological incident and just the general possibility of financial collapse.

Also we could start setting up fishing lures and nets, which would assist in the long term. Also make traps for the many birds that land and sit on the ships deck railing at night. For fruits and vegetables we would have to run our fast rescue boat to Egmont or Mullet Key to acquire soil and plants while saving all the seeds from those we had already consumed on board. With the soil we could build a garden on the stern of the vessel and on the deck I live on (there is a large open flat deck just outside and aft of my stateroom on the 01 level). This would increase our long term survivability. For crew members wishing to depart (we would rather reduce our numbers than deal with a mutiny later on) we could run our fast recue boat to the shore at St. Pete and let them go (with some provisions and weapons).

As there are no firearms allowed on board, we do have a number of fire axes, two hooligan tools, hammers, knives and boat hooks in the event we encountered any walking dead on our excursions ashore for supplies or food. If we encounter civilians choosing piracy we have flares (rocket and handheld), sample bottles which could be converted into Molotov cocktails and firehoses which can be charges to 200 psi. Plus our engineers are competent welders and could craft range weapons.

Obviously, the average person could not survive at sea, but mariners already on ships could. Especially if they formed a society to help each other. The only problem would be the fact that very few women work on ships so this would have to be addressed.

A. C.

LETTER OF THE YEAR! (Though more than slightly creepy closing line... that's the fly in your ointment, I guess.)

GREAT letter... very informative. Still, though... OUR characters couldn't live at sea... so there!

But otherwise... yeah... I guess I was wrong. Phooey!

Happy Halloween, you bag o' freaks! See you in two weeks. Jesus vs. the Whisperers!

And check out this preview of RUMBLE by two of the most important comic creators of this decade, John Arcudi and James Harren! Another Image instant classic!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Holy crud? The next issue is only two weeks away! YEESH!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

So this Carl shit flat-out upset me. It was tough to balloon and I'd rather not talk to Robert for the rest of the week, if possible. (I have caller ID, so it's definitely possible.)

Sorry... you're not going to be so happy with me after next issue either.

Dear, don't mind me whispering, kirkncrew,

Just got done devouring issue 132 and all i can say is Wow!! Best issue by far for a while. Where to begin?

1. Andrea. Please dont cut off any more pieces of her, shes lost enough. Magna doesnt seem stupid, but who knows with this wildcard.

Have any pieces been cut off of her? Is that a thing that is done to Andrea? She'll be FINE. I swear. ABSOLUTELY fine.

She's definitely missing part of her ear. That counts.

2. Sophia. Glad to see she bullied away her craziness.

...poor Carl...

3. I know people are complaining about the new character design, Rick looks fine, but when Carl puts back on the hat, those glasses gotta go.

LAY OFF, CARL! Who are you, Czar of Post-Apocalyptic Fashion?

4. Again, I know you are all probably way sick of the 52 week a year issue

Yeah, totally are. Thanks for writing!

Daniel Mark Rivera
Middletown N.Y

Sean! Did you totally delete part of question 4?! SHAME on you!

Y'know... just because you did that... we ARE doing 52 issues in 2015. It's settled. Sorry, Charlie... it just HAS to be done.

Dear Team TWD,

"The Walking Dead" is phenomenal and the new storyline about the "whisperers" is sensational — really different, morbid, terrifying and fascinating. I love it.

The only slight disappointment I've had is what was skipped in the time jump. I waited a full arc to see if it brought me around but I still have one nagging disappointment about what wasn't shown, especially in terms of paying off the arcs of the secondary characters.

You haven't missed much, and I promise having all the changes unfold in backstory is more interesting. It was a number of years of relative peace. It would have been 40 issues OR MORE (remember, the book doesn't exactly move in real time) of birthday cakes and planting trees. People would have left the book in droves. AND if I'd added action or drama or life threatening stakes... it would have made Rick's plan wrong... he ended the war and brought peace to the land... had to pay that off. You'll find out what

happened to Michonne eventually.

So much character material was deprived a pay-off... Eugene/Rosita has been bubbling away for years and I was sad that we didn't see their relationship begin. The Carsons are fascinating and played a fairly significant part in AOW — I hoped we'd find out more or at least see their reunion. Even more so — Dwight! How he interacts with the Savivors, let alone Sherry, was something I'd been dying to see. And Negan's backstory: I could read Negan scenes all day and now Carl must now know a lot more about him than we do which is a little frustrating as until now we'd seen so much from his POV. Meanwhile, Rick/Andrea relationship has deepened hugely (but she still doesn't know how Ben died), Herschel was born, Sophia has changed almost completely: these aren't high points of drama but I thought the series had earned the chance to show these major pay-offs in the character's lives and relationships.

While I wouldn't call most of these major payoffs, there's always going to be some missed opportunities with a time jump of an indeterminate period. But the hope is that where the story picks up will be infinitely more interesting than anything you missed. As for Negan's backstory... well, there are still plans for that.

Plus, the aftermath of a war left so many logistical issues: many wounded but medicine centralised in the Sanctuary which seemed to have an addiction problem; food running low; the need for some kind of political leadership and criminal justice system to be established; and the beginning of coordinated anti-walker strategies. Plus, we still know quite little about the Kingdom, Jesus and others.

I can see the case for speeding the timeline up and I'm not against a time skip in principle — an arc about crop-rotation doesn't wow me and I can see that you don't want the series to feel backward-looking — but I feel like there must have been at least 6 issues' worth of character-rich, politically-complex, danger-filled action before the jump — a "Here We Remain" or "We Find Ourselves" equivalent to follow "All Out War".

When you do this kind of thing... you want it to have the most impact. You'll get a sense of how all these things went down over time. I promise. And to be honest, your frustration is kind of the point... you SHOULD be wondering about all these things.

All this said, the series is still genius, the art is unbelievable and #130 was my favourite issue since #113 — floored me! The pay-off in #132 was just as good. I just hope that alongside the new awesomeness, the longer-running plot threads aren't abandoned.

Definitely not!

Keep up the magnificent work,

Edward Reynolds

PS. Any news on Super Dinosaur #23?

I got 22 pages of fully colored art on my computer. So, soon.

Sending it off to the printer this week!

Kirkman and Co,

Just finished my second read through of issue 132 and I am loving the hell out of this arc. I love the slow burn of you teasing us about Michonne in particular, but making us wait and wonder what's become of her. Keep it up... As long as we eventually do get to see her and the reason for her absence is epic.

Oh, Michonne? She's just been chilling. Everything's cool with her situation. She's FINE. ABSOLUTELY fine.

Heh.

I'm also so intrigued by Magna. Is she good, is she bad? What exactly are her motives? I just don't know. One thing there was never any doubt about for me was that she is another strong, decisive, intelligent character. I kind of want her to have nefarious motives though, because I do love a good villainess. Either way, bravo man!

I love the artwork on the "Walkie Talkies!" Were Leatherface and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre a point of inspiration at all for how this was drawn or for your storyline? As soon as I saw that first close up of the "Walkie Talkie" that Dante killed I couldn't help but think of Leatherface and Ed Gein. When the big fucker comes up behind him in the last panel I had visions of Dante being chased through a field by a chainsaw wielding fiend!

You're the second person to bring up walkie talkies, but the other dude thought the walkers had walkie talkies strapped to them or something, which would've been friggin' bizarre.

I love it all guys! Keep it up and thank you so much. I spend a lot of my time with my head in the TWD universe and I love every minute.

Free Negan!
Carly Hudson
Houston, TX

Well, while I wouldn't say Leatherface was a direct inspiration in the idea itself (it was really just an evolution of Michonne's tactics with the zombie pets), the word "leatherface" was definitely used in describing things to Charlie on how I wanted these people to look.

There's just only so many people who wear people's faces, you know?

Dear Letter Hacks Team,

I love how this comic raises the issues of morality when the world has gone to hell and how Rick has changed morally over time from brutally killing the Hunters for threatening them through to giving Negan a life sentence for his crimes.

However I am interested in the morality behind diverting a herd.

This tactic threw the herd directly at Magna and co. Yes, Jesus brought them to safely to Alexandria but not before Bernie was killed. What if they were all killed?

Did Rick or Eugene ever think about this happening and if so are deaths, like Bernie's, just the cost of protecting his people?

Kind regards,

Jason
Kwinana, Western Australia

Regardless of how many people are alive out there... there's a good chance that there are far more people being saved by diverting a herd away from their network of communities, than people endangered on the other end. It's something they wrestle with... but there's just not a viable alternative.

We'll see them discussing these things at some point.

Okay, to start off, all I'd like to say is I LOVE Rick's new look!! The beard and bald is sweet. He looks like a wise badass lumberjack.

Secondly, I really dug the twist with the whispering roamer talkers. I was worried you were going to make up some bogus poop about them developing "skills". Then I saw the stitches and wondered if there was some strange scientist

making a army of weaponized rotting flesh. But I love this!

Finally, I love the five step tactic!! It's awesome seeing how everything has developed over an undeclared amount of time. I know it's a "slower" part of the story, but I've loved it so much.

I'd also argue that springing that tactic on you out of nowhere in that issue was much more effective than watching them develop it over time... seeing them learn it and train other people... boring.

So excited to see Carl begin a new season and to see the Leather Face Gang's intentions.

We're not going to call them "The Leather Face Gang." Okay?

Thank you for writing this awesomeness!!! Been following since issue 20 and I'm absolutely still a big fan. And in my travels I've shared this awesome story with people from Norway to Israel! Thank you!

Much love and appreciation!

Dylan Williams,
Oban, Scotland

I've never asked you, Robert, but what was the inspiration behind the five step thing? You do a lot of research on military formations and whatnot?

It just... seemed like... a logical way... to kill slow moving groups of zombies that have surrounded you? I don't know... it probably came from that one level on Police Trainer with the baseball bat guys approaching you?

I'm pretty good at that level. All of them, actually.

Good day sirs,

I finally wrote my first Letter Hack last week and now that I've popped the top, it seems I cannot stop.

Oh... Hey! You're that person from up there! Cool.

While having a lively conversation with my Walking Dead Support Group (heeeey, yooooo guuuuyyyys!) we got into an interesting debate that I am hoping you can clear up, please.

There's a Walking Dead Support Group?!

Our conversation started with, "What would you do if you got bit?" My answer was that I would find someone to have sex with immediately so that I could go out with a BANG. The question that arose from my answer, the question that I am now posing to you is: Since I was bit would I infect my partner with the equivalent of a Walker STD? Would my partner turn with me because we swapped fluids? Please enlighten us so we can make educated decisions should we get bit in the TWD universe.

Thank you for being the cause of such debates.

Love forever,
Carly Hudson
Houston, TX

Some things are better left unanswered.

If you had a septic wound that was infecting your blood stream, would you pass that infection through sex? No. So... having sex with someone after they've been bitten... much like eating a living human's flesh after they've been bitten (show reference... to a thing that happened years ago in the comic) has no effect on you.

So yeah... better left unanswered.

See you next month, when it's all about the children. And where I invent new reasons not to talk to Robert.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Do you NEED more reasons? Grumble. The honeymoon is over folks! See you next month.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Damn you, Gregory! Seriously, what is that guy's problem? He seems to go completely under the radar when it comes to being the most hated, and has secretly become captain of the All-Useless Squad since Spencer died. The hell with that guy.

What?! You don't like Gregory?! He's the new main character of the book! None of this Rick Grimes... move over Carl Grimes... we're never going to see Michonne again! It's all Gregory ALL THE TIME!

Letters!

Dear TWD,

First I want to thank you for the great read. I'm really enjoying the current story line. Thank you. I'm writing because I've noticed people complaining about Rick's look. I think Rick looks awesome. He looks war hardened. So shut yer cock holsters ya whiny fucking fucks!

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Britt in Kansas City

Feels like it's been too long since we took all our weirdos off the bench and set them loose in these pages. Welcome to this month.

What are you saying? Is it weird to love Rick's new look? If so... you can call me Miles Davis!

Finally two folks who can really begin to bring things back to normal for everyone, Louie and Larry. Having them around should ensure that any living body, even those who wearing face flesh masks (that would make Steve Buscemi from Con Air proud) would not want to put any sort of hiccup in a brand new booze distribution and supply. Thinking back on the days of high school when obtaining alcohol meant having to go though someone's older sibling or the one friend that had a passing illegitimate ID, one would always want to be in their best graces as to keep the goods chugging along. Everyone now in that world is like a high school kid, in regards to getting a stiff drink that is. In addition, everyone's tolerance is way, way down so Louie and Larry have the time to grow and meet demand, so things don't get out hand.

Any time you involve alcohol, things are going to get out of hand. Sobriety is probably the most valued attribute, besides like, knife skills or gun skills. You shouldn't be drunk around zombies.

Also, if you guys are looking for something to do with ALL your free time, which I imagine is a lot since you don't have your hands in any other sort of endeavors, I would very much like to drink an adult The Walking Dead beverage while reading a later issue (I do not expect this to coincide with the fair unveiling of their hooch). There are plenty of brewers/distillers that love all of your work and would be more than willing to collaborate with you guys. I'm probably wrong in thinking that this thought has not crossed your minds, but on the off chance that it hasn't and you pursue the fermentation process I fully expect a case delivered to my house for sparking the idea.

Clifford from Sacramento

Someone out there already put goat brains in a beer. I don't think we want to try to top that.

Agreed.

Hi Kirkman and the Kirkettes,

Quick niggle from #133.

If a walker is close enough to use a knife, it is almost close enough to bite a person. Fact. Jesus is uber-skilled at walker killing and wouldn't allow a gang of walkers to simply walk up to within biting distance of his group. Fact.

Bearing these TWD facts in mind, how did Jesus and his gang allow a bunch of walkie-talkies to get close enough to pull weapons and attack without even a sniff of a weapon being unsheathed in the name of defence?

Loving your work by the way!

Rich
Leeds, UK

They were very quiet... zombies sneak up on people all the time.

Dear Kirkman,

Can we PLEASE get a backstory issue of Abraham, Jesus, and Negan? I am dying to know what Negan did before the apocalypse. Or what he was like during the beginning of it. I also miss Abraham, I know you touched on it briefly when he, Rick and Carl were attacked on the road in issue 57, but I want to see it unfold, and Jesus is one of my favorites and I would like to know what he did before the apocalypse. So will we see them issues?

Damien Raynor
Jamestown, NY

The show just did a really good take on Abraham. I love the short stories Robert's done, but there really needs to be a compelling reason to tell them.

Exactly. We'll definitely get more info on Negan and Jesus at some point (possibly soon), but Abraham's story is told... except for on the TV show... where there is still plenty of story to tell. Enjoy!

Hey Robert,

I'm loving the new antagonist direction and I think you are going to outdo yourself with the new story arc. Can't wait to see a walker herd directed at the upcoming fair and these Whisperers looming in there! Hope they have enough ammo! Doesn't appear that close quarters fighting will cut it anymore.

I love the speculation... nice work.

Though this is really bringing up a lot of questions.

1. These Whispers seem pretty primal. Would they really want what Rick and his community has? Seems like they are just territorial like a hive of hornets.

A little more advanced than a hive, to be sure... but you're barking up the right tree. Stay tuned.

2. If these Whisperers walk with the walkers, do they have a mobile camp? Can't build a fire in front of walkers. Then I started to think, are these folks cave dwellers?

Not cave dwellers... but it's not exactly practical to sleep with walkers nearby.

3. I’m going to take a guess where these folks live. Crystal Grottoes Caverns, Boonsboro MD. 60 miles Northwest of DC. Two days by horseback. Just enough distance to where they and Rick’s group may not have encountered each other until Marco and Ken got off course. I nail it?

Nope... but thanks for playing!

Been reading since Dec 2012 when I binge read everything up to that point in a matter of days. This comic keeps getting better and better! Keep up the great work!

Matthew
Chicago, IL

Thanks, Matthew! I’ve always wondered what it’s like for a reader who reads ten years worth of comics in a couple days and then is trapped reading the books monthly from there on out... it must be weird. Glad you’re sticking around!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I’m digging the character arc for Eugene so far. He’s come a long way from being the chubby, cowardly member of the gang. I’m not saying that he’s some sort of action hero now, but he’s got some serious depth. He lost a lot of weight for Rosita, and now he’s willing to forgive her infidelity and raise a kid that’s not even his? Damn. Either he’s an amazing guy, or he just doesn’t think that he deserves better.

So, which is it? If you don’t mind my asking, that is.

Keep reading?

Keep reading.

By the way, I can relate. I lost nearly 100 pounds as a cart pusher several years back. Just make sure that he doesn’t look like a body builder if the shirt ever comes off on-panel. Extra skin is a very real thing for people who lose that much weight during adulthood. It’s kind of a downer, honestly.

Keep up the awesome work, man. This series just keeps getting better and better.

Regards,
Shawn Brockmeier

Thanks! I’ll do my best... to never lose 100 lbs... loose skin...

To my beloved Kirkmainiacs,

First, I’ve just got to say that the show has come a long way in the last few seasons, and in just about every area. The characters seem more engaging, the dialogue is more fluid, and the action is absolutely top notch! TAAINTED MEAT!!

However, as excited as I am for the rest of season five, I absolutely cannot contain my excitement for what lies beyond issue 134. The stage is set for Carl to finally become the lead character, and the addition of the Whisperers ramped up the dark, menacing nature of his world that much more. I’m still a little fuzzy on how they resist infection in walker skins, but I trust you to at least give it a nod at some point. I also wasn’t too fond of Carl’s new look initially, but once he slicked his hair back, it clicked. Way to go, Mr. Adlard. Got to add though, you’ve got to show us The Kingdom and The Saviors! I’m assuming you’re withholding this information for a reason.. What’s the deal with Michonne?! Or Ezekiel for that matter!

Keep reading!

Between season five, the new comic arc, and season two of telltale’s masterwork series, I’m totally hyped up and back in the saddle for TWD! Thank you for the last five years (when I heard about it) of walker-gunk-covered entertainment.

P.S. If this ends up in the letter hacks when Rick dies, I am officially immortal.

Mitchell

Sorry to say, you’re slowly rotting like the rest of us flesh bags.

Dear Kirkman and Co,

I’m sending you that letter because I have a question and a suggestion.

First of all, I just want to say that I’m a huge fan of The Walking Dead Comic since t10 and the return in Kentucky with Abraham. Usually, I’m not a comic book’s reader but I’m must admit that the walking dead is the best graphic novel I have ever read. Of course, It has his ups and downs but real life has

it too so for me it’s not a big deal.

My question is: In issue 133, Andrea is proposing some coffee to Magna’s group. How can they still have coffee after more than 4 years. Have they found some supplies around Alexandria ? I think it will be strange because there is no way that there is still supplies after all that time.

Instant coffee? I wouldn’t imagine a pipeline has opened up from Hawaii or anything.

Yeah, instant coffee has a very long shelf life. They’re running out, for sure.

Maybe they have a partnership with a south-american community who brings them the coffee. In that case, do they also have some cocaine for the hardest times? No really, I want to know how is that possible?

You got a real thing for stimulants, huh?

That’s all I wanted to share with you. Just continue to bring us that amazing comic.

Sincerely
Eddy from Paris, your deepest french fan.

Thanks for writing in!

Hey guys,

Do people still surf in the new walker-infested world? If anybody is gonna be stoked for an apocalypse it’s gotta be surfers. Walking up to your favorite spot that used to have 75+ guys now empty except for a couple of dead dudes. I mean I guess it would take time away from gathering resources and stuff but I know I’m not the only one who would at least consider it. Anyways love the book, keep up the good work!

Aloha,
Taylor Riavic
San Diego, CA

Not so much surfing on the Atlantic, but yeah, I’d imagine if there were any folks still left in Hawaii, they’d catch a few tasty waves then go back home for some fresh Kona coffee.

You just printed this ridiculous surfing letter because you wanted to make the coffee joke. I approve.

Not true! It just worked out that way. We don’t print enough surfing letters!

Hey guys at the Walking Dead, this is my first time writing so I want to start this letter off like every fan boy by saying that I love the Walking Dead. But I will get right to the point. In the last issue, issue 133 if this is posted later, there was a point where Carl and Sofia were about to eat dinner together and Maggie and someone she was with made a joke about a “Grimes/Greene Union” and how it would get people talking. Being that Maggie and Rick both are leaders in these communities, a marriage between these two powerful families could be like a sharing of political power like in feudal Europe. Was that supposed to show that society, power, and politics will have to go through the same primitive trial and error periods before we start seeing more liberal democracies and free societies like today? Or am I just over analyzing the whole thing?

Hope my question made sense,

Love the show, Jake

Overanalyzing.

For sure. There’s some element to that... people being interested in marriages between “ruling families,” but it’s not like Carl would just inherit the title of leader if Rick dies.

Well, we got close to an all-weirdo Hacks. Maybe next month we can live the dream together. See you next month, when... well, you’ll find out soon enough.

-Sean Mackiewicz

This one was supposed to be weirder than normal? I certainly didn’t notice. You guys let me down! Write weirder letters! No... I’m kidding. Please don’t!

See you next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Where's Michonne? Seriously, where's Michonne already?

Actually, I like Carl more than Michonne... but I'm liable to change my mind when (if) she shows back up. Love the one you're with, that's what I say.

Don't stoke the flames of that fire, Sean!

Dudes,

Issue 134. Holy pig shit. This is why this book continues to top my must read list. I really hope all of the pissers and moaners in previous Letter Hacks who have threatened to stop reading, have. They don't deserve to know a Walking Dead world where Carl is a ravenous murdering psychopath who can flip to homicidal insanity in a fucking second. He did kill them, right? Yeah...he killed them. He totally killed them.

No.

He did.

He really didn't.

At least I'm pretty sure he did.

I don't mean to be a dick, but I'm definitely sure he didn't.

Anyway, Carl with a mean streak is the best kind of Carl. Cold cock me with a brick when I'm not looking, he says. EAT SHOVEL, DICKWADS! Cheap shotting bitches get stitches. I'm so pumped to see how this plays out. The son of the legendary Rick Grimes on trial for murder! Doomed to a lifetime of exchanging jail house tats with Negan! But I'm getting ahead of myself...

Yeah, this is getting embarrassing, how wrong you are... Top marks for enthusiasm though!

Awesome stuff...fuck the haters...keep it up.

Jared
Gainesville, FL

I really hope Jared isn't suddenly disappointed when he finds out what really happened. It's still cool, right, Jared?

Whew. I knew when Carl ran off after getting smacked with a brick, he'd be back to deal out some punishment. However, I thought it would be a pistol-whipping or something along those lines. As laid back as he's been since the time jump, I didn't see that beast with a shovel lurking.

I'm glad I didn't have to wait the usual month of waiting to see Jesus fuck that set of "whisperers" up too. When the last issue ended, I had a good feeling it wasn't going to turn out well for those people who had Jesus surrounded. I'm curious to find out how many of the whisperers there are out there.

And, damn it...semi-patiently waiting for Michonne to show back up.

Thank you for your patience.

Darrick Patrick
Dayton, Ohio

Each time a letter writer asks where Michonne is I push her reappearance (or confirmation of her death) back by two issues.

Wow. Jesus is a bad ass!! What's the back story on this guy? Who trained him to become so fucking awesome??

His Father.

Also... Is 134 the first Rickless issue?

No, he's been absent a couple issues, the most recent being #105, where Carl and Negan bond in Savior territory.

It's definitely the start of a trend, though.

You guys rock! Keep up the awesome work. And can we please get a sequel to the futuristic edition of TWD... Featuring motherfucking Negan!

Dan Pellegrino
Yuba City, California

You mean the full color story from THE WALKING DEAD #75 that most people don't even remember exists? I'd love to continue that with Ryan Ottley at some point, but we're quite busy with INVINCIBLE. Maybe for issue 150... wait... that's coming up soon... crap.

To my Favorite People in the whole wide world,

#134, WOW! Wowwowwow! Mr. Kirkman, Mr. Mackiewicz is just going to have to suck it up, what you did with Carl. Every character in the book (and show) has got to have a crap-load of PTSD (and continuing-TSD)... so it makes perfect sense Carl wouldn't put up with any more bullying-bullplop and just end it right then and there... not that he was really thinking about what he was doing, more like he was acting on intuition and experience. Like father like son. And it was a fair fight. Brick vs. shovel. Shovel wins.

Brick will have its day.

So, precursor to me claiming my pull box tonight: Every Wednesday I carry around a WD action figure in my left breast pocket of my shirt (people at work have gotten used to this and don't seem to notice any more). Today I carried the B&W version of Jesus (from Skybound.com, thank you very much).

We also now have these sweet new Clementine figures available, as well. She's a bit smaller, your pocket might swallow her up. Really cool sculpt.

I couldn't wait to pick up #134 after work to find out for sure Jesus wasn't killed. The guys at the comic shop wouldn't tell me (shout out to Cosmic Comics in as Vegas, woot!) and instead just teased me about how good the issue was. So all my concentration was on Jesus, and getting into the action of his fight in the first part of #134. Nice back kicks with both legs in opposite directions! Jesus da man (and obviously so is Mr. Adlard)! Phew! He made it. Then holy-jiggers, KirkMAN, you throw in the Carl/Sofia action! WOW!!! I yelled from my spot on the couch and my wife immediately responded with, "Don't tell me don't tell me!" (She's a few issues behind).

[BTW, Mr. Kirkman, I saw your video on your Jesus unboxing, and I have to agree, when we were kids we also

called those hats “toboggans,” and I don’t know why.]

Maybe because kids rode them while sledding? I don’t know. It’s a stupid name we thankfully never used in New England... or the 21st century. (In the next issue of MANIFEST DESTINY though, Lewis & Clark ride a toboggan to escape the dreaded Yeti!)

I was getting ready to fire you until you turned it into a plug for MANIFEST DESTINY. Good save, Sean. Good save.

For my birthday next month, my awesome wife is throwing me a Walking Dead party and everybody is supposed to dress up as a character from TWD (comic or show, their pick). I had originally decided to be Zombie Merle, but after this issue, I want to be a Walkie Talkie! (I love the name Carly Hudson came up with in the letters section and I wish I’d thought of it myself). Maybe for my birthday you can print my letter? I would probably wet myself a little in giddy happiness. (Too far?)

I am definitely not running this because it’s your birthday or because you asked. That would set a DANGEROUS precedent. (Happy Birthday, though!)

Thank you for bringing a ray of sunshine to my day!

Laurie Rikke
Las Vegas, NV

Dear Kirkman,

at one point you said that Michonne was the strongest character in the book. do you think that has changed to Paul (Samurai Jesus) Monroe? I mean, I don’t know if any other character could have done what he did against the whisperers. not even Michonne?

HULK IS STILL STRONGEST THERE IS!!!

Also I love the influence of negan on carl. keep up the good work,

Israel gulley

Dear Kirkman & crew,

First of all, I don’t believe this letter will ever be published, you see, I’m not a lucky guy! But I really hope you get to read it at least. Secondly, I just LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT THE WALKING DEAD. Everything!!! The writing, the drawings, the cliffhangers, the characters and I’m not personally a zombie fan! For that, thank you so much for making my life much better and to giving me something to do whenever I don’t feel like studying lol Anyway, I want you to know that the direction you’re taking this comic to is simply amazing. I have absolutely no idea where or how this Whisperers shit will end and what repercussions it will bring to everyone, but I’m eager to find that out. Before I say my goodbyes, one small question. Anything huge planned for issue 150? I mean, besides being a milestone, it’s also the finale of the 25th volume!!! That has got to count for something right? Finally, thank you once again for being so awesome in what you do! My best wishes, you fuckers! AND MAKE SURE YOU PUBLISH THIS OK? IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TYPING ON MY PHONE!

Alex Webster

Jeebus... #150 comes out one year from now. You’ve still got 13 more to write before then! Don’t let that thought cripple your writing process, Robert!

Typing on your phone?! C’mon! Yeah... 150... we should definitely do something special there. I’ll start making plans. And Sean, 13 more issues in no way intimidates me. Once it got over 100... what’s a few hundred more?

During the All Out War Arc, did more people die from the Alexandria Safe-Zone, Hilltop Colony, The Kingdom or the Sanctuary?

Jarrold

I think technically the Kingdom lost more people... I think. Sean?

I think it was a tie.

Or, actually, maybe it was the Sanctuary that lost more people. I wasn’t really keeping a tally.

Hey again Kirkman and pals!

Whatever happened to Rick’s hatchet? Is it just used for chopping firewood these days or did he ditch it along with that phone?

Cheers!

Owen

He mounted it above his fireplace, swearing never to use it again.

He sort of just abandoned it after they got to Alexandria, right? I don’t think he ever really had any affinity for it the way Michonne thinks of her sword.

Heh heh heh, so Carl went apeshit on those kids eh? Let’s hope he takes it further and goes crazyade bonkers with a chainsaw. And sex.

Chainsaws and sex should never mix.

I want him to be the next “Big Bad”. I want Rick to have to deal with what a fucknuckle Carl’s become. You see where I’m coming from? Make the squeeing Carlfans cry. Go on, you know it makes sense.

Man, you guys have such a low opinion of Carl.

Oh and let Rick and Andrea get married in a lovely ceremony. With walkers as maids of honour. See? I’m really an old romantic at heart.

Been a while since we had a proper wedding.

Paul Cowan
Wrexham, Wales

Yes it has...

ok just hear me out! i have been thinking about this for the last couple days and i thought MAYBE it might interest you if you hadnt thought of it already. what if we kill rick, instead of shane? kinda do it all over again maybe and everything stays the same, except shane succeeds in killing rick! how would it change, would they survive? of course hershal would kick them out blah blah blah, but would they make it farther? would they die off faster? would they all split up because shane is a dick hole. so many possibilities! it would be like an alternate “ending” only not. i think it could come out really cool. my boyfriend doesnt care for the show, but i make him watch it, and i told him my idea last night, he said it was worth a shot :) i hope to hear back from you on why its good or bad, i would like the imput :) thank you for reading my letter :)

Marcella

Have you ever talked about this? About how the choice between who would survive that first arc--Rick or Shane--was a very real thing?

I’ve talked about it in the letters column many times... and I’ll talk about it in THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR... if I ever get around to finishing that book. I’ve also thought out how it would be cool to do a one-shot laying out how things would be different... or a whole side series, and then I ruled that out because it’s a terrible idea. But the fact that there isn’t a second “what if”-style WALKING DEAD series is literally the ONLY evidence left that I’m not a complete sellout.

Next month, something happens that a lot of you have requested... Though you folks have requested lots of bat shit things, so you’re better off not jumping to conclusions. It’s a good one.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, boy... I can’t wait!

See you all back here very soon!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

When Robert told me about the whole “licking the eye socket” thing, he didn’t tell me what happened right after that. We don’t discuss tender moments as much. But I’d love to discuss them with you all.... complete strangers.

Heh. Our little Carl is growing up...

I was really shocked to see the whisperer that Jesus captured was a (pretty) teenage girl. Surely that is going to save her? She says childhood doesn’t exist so I’m guessing she isn’t very innocent. So my question/prediction is that she is going to seduce Carl?

Bill

Is it seduction? Or just teenage love? More to come!

Good call, Bill!

Dear Walking Dead,

I cannot praise you enough for your brilliant book. But I would like to take a moment to make observations on the post-war story arc. I know you are working hard to start epic new storylines about Carl’s future, Spencer 2’s devious plans, Michonne’s absence and something about talking zombies. And I’m sure there are some readers who are interested in these developments. But I think I speak for the vast majority of your readers when I say that we can’t really focus on these distractions when the issue of Rosita’s baby looms over us.

We don’t get nearly enough Rosita-related mail, so we’re going to OVERDO it with this one.

I know you won’t give us all of the details but can you drop a few clues?

1) Did Rosita tell Eugene who the father was?

Nope.

2) Is the father an established character or someone we haven’t met?

I’m not telling.

3) Which community does the father live in?

I’m not telling.

4) Did Rosita confess to Eugene because she’s expecting the baby to not be white/Hispanic? OMG, is it Ezekiel’s? Is that why Michonne is gone?

Maybe she told him because it’s the right thing to do?

5) I think it’s clear that Andrea knew about the situation. Did Rick know the truth when he was cheerily counseling Eugene to talk to Rosita? Does this cause painful Shane flashbacks for Rick?

Rick doesn’t know.

Is that why he beat that patrolman?

He beat that patrolman because he was derelict at his duties. You can’t do that these days. America...

Walking Dead women tend to stay pregnant for years so any info you can give me to tide me over is appreciated.

In tortured resentment of your success,
Justin in Dallas

Rosita will be pregnant for DECADES.

I am writing to say PLEASE PLEASE start editing the letters for typos and spelling again, it’s unbearable to see!

Mark Jackson
Pasadena, TX

NO. You folks get the letters page you deserve. You need to start policing yourselves. Did spell check actually make folks worse at spelling? Do they still teach spelling in school? Should we make Walking Dead-themed flashcards? Do you know what flashcards are, or is there an app for that now? I’m not old enough to sound this cranky!!!

Stop covering for your laziness. You just don’t want to proofread the letters as you read.

Kirkman, I felt pissed off reading issue 135 over the dramatic nonsense unfolding over Carl’s defense of Sophia, and then a moment of clarity....I wasn’t pissed off at the dramatic content, I was pissed at the character’s on the page! Thank you, as always, for making the story real, as I sat there agitated, about to go into cardiac arrest on a commuter train, angry at the parents of Sophia’s attackers. The new society is not as stable as it appeared since the war ended, and I am interested to see how this will play out. In the post-apocalyptic society we are witnessing, are there enough “decent” people left to live in a productive society, or will this end up showing us that dictatorships like Negan are the only way to keep people in line? As always, great work to the entire team on the Comic and the Show. Happy Holidays

Mike Mustache

You can’t cure people from being shitheads. Especially in an apocalypse.

Very true.

DEAR TWD TEAM,

I really loved this passed issue (135) it’s probably one of my favorites especially Carl telling them they’re “FUCKING FUCKWADS.” and Maggie giving him the run down on their new society. Also will Carl’s character be

more restraint on his actions after the fight or he’s still going to be the same?

Are you familiar with how hormones work? Teenage boys are shitheads. Especially when they think they’re right.

my second question is, are we going to see the walking dead focus on Carl in this storyline?

keep up the amazing job!!!

Jaime

Robert & Sean--

Regarding the question in Letter Hacks about the availability of coffee for Andrea to serve Magna & friends back in #133 --Andrea had to be serving chicory! Chicory has been served as a coffee substitute during times of shortage since the Union naval blockade of the Confederacy cut off the South’s coffee during the Civil War. The stuff grows nearly anywhere in North America. I’m certain Andrea’s “coffee” came from the roots of chicory found out in the gardens of Alexandria.

Your book is one of the main reasons I’m still buying and reading comics after 55 of my 62 years! Finicky old bastard that I am, I really dislike superhero books and it’s fortunate for me that there are non-superhero alternatives like Walking Dead, The Fade Out, Southern Bastards, Men of Wrath ...you get the idea.

Now, back to my comics and real coffee,
--Old Fart from Oklahoma

This is EXACTLY the type of letter we get for MANIFEST DESTINY, so can I recommend, Old Fart, you check that Skybound title out? First two trades are available, with fantastic art and a writer that knows what the hell chicory is.

I would just like to formally say that YOU’D BETTER NOT BE DRAWING ANY PARALLELS BETWEEN CARL AND NEGAN OR I’LL KILL YOU.

That is all,
Will Kirk

That’s... pretty rude. What else would I expect from a guy with two first names?

Too late!

Will you ever have Jeffery mentioned or Featured in the show, video games, or his own novel? He kinda got left to the reader’s imagination. I always had a feeling that Jeffery Grimes is a ladiesman , that’s why Rick doesn’t like mentioning him, Or maybe Jeff is so much of a bad-ass that Rick feels jealous? Possibly,He’s leading a group that still kill.

You’re walking greatness,
Marquest Anderson
San Jose,CA

YOU CAN’T KEEP JEFF GRIMES DOWN! (Ok, that’s the only letter he’ll be mentioned in this year. Probably.)

Hey guys. I’m currently in the hospital from a burst appendix. It’s pretty boring but it reminds me of issue 1 and Days Gone Bye. Anyways, I was looking at the walking dead wiki issue release schedules and it seems issue 144, the last one in compendium 3, releases in April 2015. Does that mean we’ll get another beautiful compendium this time next year or even earlier?

And yes, I’m okay. Also, Negan is great.

Teaghan, BC, Canada

Thanks for the reminder! Due to an accelerated publishing schedule (17 issues last year!), Compendium 3 will be out in October. Yes, this

year. Yes, right in time for Season 6 and all the TV shenanigans. Who says we don’t love you?

Seriously. WHO?!

Dear Mr Kirkman and Mr Mackiewicz

I would like start by thanking you and everyone at Skybound for all you do. I am twenty years old and I had never read a comic book before, until one day while shopping for a keychain at my local retro game store. While browsing I seen two comics sitting on a rack, issues number 116 and 117, being a fan of the show I thought why not and bought them both. After a week of owning them i finally decided to read them, and fell in love with the art and the story. Soon after that I started buying more and more Walking Dead comics, and then branched out and started reading many different titles from many publishers. (I now own between 400-600 comics) and id like to thank you all for opening me to something i had missed out on.

Now onto the matter at hand after i finished reading 135, i have to ask you can you cut Carl a break? I have a feeling this girl is going to trick him into loving her and then use the poor one eyed kid to gain her own freedom and then smash his heart to bits, (much like Glenn’s Head) Carl is one my favourite characters let him have just this one thing. Also Carl went a little Negan there didnt he? I mean those fuckwads can go fuck themselves, but i’m glad Carl and Negan’s time spent together meant something.

You write letters like you’ve been reading this book forever. It’s pretty amazing.

Finally the most important matter. After collecting all these comics, i branched out and started collecting all types of merchandise, the action figures, mini figures, shirts, swim shorts, Blu-Rays, posters, board games and my favourite piece of merchandise. It combined two of my most enjoyable hobbies, walking dead and drinking large amounts of coffee. The If Daryl Dies We Riot mug with the totally bitching crossbow handle.

One day after pouring myself a piping hot cup of coffee i went out on my porch to enjoy the beautiful day. I sat down and lifted my extremely hot cup of coffee only for the crossbow to break off, (Most likely because it was 7000 degrees and 8 liters of coffee) The cup plummeted down and landed upside down on my lap. Boiling liquid seeped through my shorts and i felt the burn of a thousand suns scorch my sack. I screamed out for help but it was too late, my junk was fried, my eggs were cooked, anyways Thanks for all the time and money ive spent enjoying what you do.

Sincerley,

The man with burnt testicles,
Connor Petrie

I don’t even care if that really happened... It was too good not to share.

(I would also like to reiterate that Skybound doesn’t produce merch that features Daryl Dixon and is in no way to blame for your tender testicle.)

Yeah... that’s not on us.

Next month, there’s TWO issues of THE WALKING DEAD for your eye holes! #138 at the beginning of the month, and #139 two weeks after. Questions are answered in both of them. Wouldn’t want to spoil them, of course.

-Sean Mackiewicz

It’s going to be great!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Big issue. BIG issue. Alpha unmasked. Lydia freed. Carl on her trail. Gregory disgraced... yet again. The only thing left to answer now that we know the Whisperer leader isn't Michonne is... where's Michonne?

Heh... it has been a lot of issues without her, hasn't it? Keep reading, readers!

Hi Walking Dead crew again!

So this story may be just absolute coincidence, or not. So please don't take this the wrong way, but... my dad came home over the weekend with a kind of beer that he hadn't ever gotten before, and it was made by a Chicago based brewing company called "Revolution Brewing". The type of beer was called "Eugene Porter".

So my question for you Kirkman is, DID YOU GET THE NAME "EUGENE PORTER" FROM A BEER CAN? By the way, I am not kidding about this. Search it for yourself. And I even checked if the company got the name from TWD and that was false.

Other than that, just keep being awesome. You guys rock, and can't wait for February 9!

Thanks,
Gavin Zawacki
Wilmette, IL

Because we don't get enough beer-related mail... According to their website, Revolution opened in 2010. Our boy Eugene made his first appearance in 2008. So killing that rumor before it even starts. Actually, couldn't you just have Googled this yourself? You lazy bastard...

As one of the only people on the planet who's never drunk an entire beer in his life, I can promise I'm not taking any inspiration from any cans of the stuff.

Hey Robert and Sean!

I had a question about the nature of the Whisperers. In Issue 134 there are two zombies trying to eat Darius, are these zombies or Whisperers? How far do these people go to be like zombies? Do they eat humans as well, or at least act like they do or something? I know it could just be regular ol' zombies that they brought with them, but I just wanted to be sure.

Lydia gets pretty disgusted when Carl asks if they eat humans, so as far as we know, they don't.

They travel WITH zombies. So the zombies that were trying to eat Darius... were zombies.

Another question, when we see the Whisperers faces, their eyes are always shadowed in, while zombies are usually drawn with blank white eyes. So, my question is, if we see a zombie with blank white eyes, then

does that confirm that they are just zombies? And if we don't see their eyes, then it could potentially be a zombie or a Whisperer? I just think it would be weird if humans wearing skin suits would be drawn with blank white eyes if they only pretending to be zombies.

Safe assumption, yes. But occasionally Rick regrows his missing hand, as well, so mistakes are sometimes made.

WHEN HAS THAT EVER HAPPENED?!

Whisperers will always look like people wearing zombie skin if we get a good look at them. Their faces were in shadow to hide the fact that they don't look like zombies if you get a close look.

Anyways, thanks for taking the time to read this, long time fan but first time writing in. :)

Stevie

Do it again!

So I'm reading 136 and Maggie has just let Carl out of the cell. How does Carl respond to this good news?

Not "great" or "thanks"

He says "Rad"...

Did Sean sneak some weed into the workplace and you guys just had a good time while you wrote this one panel?

"Rad" took my mind away from everything. It was a good issue though, despite that distraction.

But please, this isn't "Dude, Where's my car?", refrain from using "rad" ever again

A concerned fan,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"Rad" isn't acceptable? Bogus.

This letter is pretty rad.

Just finished issue 136...unreal stuff here guys. I cannot figure out Lydia right now as I believe the 'whispers' that were hiding outside the camp said that she is strong. Does this mean that she is playing Carl? I think so. And something else that just got me so pumped was the mention of 'the leader' from the same whisperers. So excited to see who this is and what he/she is capable of. I have some ideas, keep up the great work guys, one of my favourite arcs so far.

Ryan

Now that it's been revealed that Lydia is Alpha's daughter, it's probably clear why she has the reputation for being strong. As for playing Carl?

Man, does no one believe in young love anymore?

They seem to have a pretty rad relationship to me. But you never know with those two...

Dear Kirkman & Crew

I am addicted to the Walking Dead and after running to my comic book shop every month, every issue it kills me to have to wait so long. I got too Greedy with All Out War as two issues a month came out, and now I feel too spoiled. I am curious about two things.

Hey, this is the first of two issues this month! We'll spoil you from time to time just, yeah, don't get used to it.

Whoa! Two issues in one month! That's rad!

First thing is first. Magna and her gang. Obviously they are new characters and we still need an update on the people of Alexandria, Hilltop, Kingdom and Sanctuary, but I feel like you showed a new character which I am really intrigued by and just tossed her aside. Will Magna play a bigger role sooner than later?

Definitely.

Second Thing: Will we ever find out who the real Father of Rosita's child is? Or is it going to be left as a mystery on purpose? (At same time, I just want to say that Eugene is such an amazing character and I CAN'T wait to see where you guys take him as well).

It will probably be revealed eventually, but not soon.

Last Thing: I just want to say Kudos on the cover of Issue 136. It's honestly my favorite cover. No other cover has given me the creeps as much as this one has. As much as I love that fucking motherfucker Negan, The Whisperers give me this crazy fear which I haven't received in a long time with the Walking Dead.

Rad!

Keep up the good work guys. I hope that you guys keep doing your stuff....thangs....and don't get bitten by any Walkers.

Robert Habachi
Montreal, Quebec

We'll do our best to stay safe.

Hey there, you know that's the first time ever (!) I write for a comic (or a show or whatever). But I really had to write for TWD or sure I had to! Just finished #136 and well.. that's something interesting! The development on Carl's personality is impressive, I think as we don't see Rick every often now, that he is finally becoming the "new Rick", but god, he is still young and unpredictable I really hope he doesn't f*ck things up on the Hill top with his new f*cked up (girl)friend.. Maybe, he's becoming the new bad boy in town (we all know he had some talking with Negan) but well he really seems to care about trying to have a new "civilization". Really can't wait to know what he's up to with this whisperer girl. THAT BEING SAID, PLEASE PLEASE DON'T KILL MAGGIE! I really enjoy her character in the comics, (on the show she seems to be a bad ass from the beginning and that's awesome) but Maggie in the comic is far more interesting, what's she had been through and what she overcame! (Really like her coming up to Alexandria with her big guns on the #120) Really like Sophia too, and hope we'll see more of (master of the sniper) Andrea in the next issues! Soooo, thank you for the awesome female characters it's nice to have women to identify myself with (Oh I'd wish!)

Yeah, I'm done, sorry for my english,
Marjolaine from France

And now we have Alpha, who no doubt will eventually measure up to all the women you

mentioned.

Here at TWD central, we think ladies are rad.

Dear Killman

Hi gang (British fan still getting over Glenn here) just writing to say loving the new fake walkers, or falkers, if you would. Love the fact that this is seen as insane, where as Rick coating himself in zombie guts was surviving. I feel it's like in the TV show with terminus the difference between the good and the bad is so fine. The lines aren't just blurred, there gone.

Question time

1.are we gonna get a shock killing soon?

I hope so.

Wouldn't it be a cool twist if no one else died in the comic ever again?

2.will we see Negan as the new saviour?

Of the community? Or will he rejoin the Savors? Judging by the cover, Negan fans will be excited to get their hands on #141.

3.why is Charlie Adlard not king of England?

He's actually 138th in line to the throne. Cool, right?

Gary

In Issue #3, that hat went flying off of Rick's head. In issue #4, he puts it on Carl. Carl's had that hat for 132 goddamn issues. I BETTER BE ABLE TO TRUST THIS LYDIA CHICK!

Ethan Tompkins
Williamsport, Pa

PS: Why does drinking always make me want to yell at you?

Maybe don't drink so much? Seems like an easy conclusion, right?

Rad.

You gave her Carl's hat!?! Are you nuts?? Lydia seems like a good kid but I don't trust her at all. I admit wearing walker skin is a brilliant tactic, but to do something like that i'm sure it takes a bit of sanity away. Not to mention the others outside said she was strong, for adults to call a kid strong they have to prove themselves first, what the hell has she done to earn that much confidence in the rest of her group? You're killing me with the suspense. Can't wait for the next issue, looks intense! See ya next month.

-Devin DiTomaso
Haverhill, Ma

Does anyone besides me trust Lydia? You guys are sooooo skeptical.

Yeah, sheesh. Try to be a little more rad, won't you?

See you in two weeks. Rick's on the cover, and there's also a boat. For all you folks that have written letters about why aren't there boats in this comic, next issue goes out to you!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Next issue is going to be pretty rad.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Michonne! And Ezekiel! AND Dwight was mentioned! A classic TWD triple play! Now we can all move on and just enjoy the story, right? And also read some letters.

Rejoice! Michonne is back... Are you happy now?

Letters!

Yo robert,
Where the fuck is michonne!! Like for real this time. You know how many issues its been?? Like 7 thats 7 minths without my girl. You trying give a man serious withdrawals!

Aaron

That's what I'm saying! You won't be going another 7 months for her next appearance either!

It was 13 issues without her, right? 127 to 139... I'm bad at math. I honestly started missing her after a while... I hope her return was worth the wait. BOATS! OCEAN! FISH! WOO!

Love the comic! Been reading since issue #1!!! Just a quick question. Are you ever going to show the coast? I would love to see adlard show the east coast or even the gulf of mexico totally destroyed! ! Perhaps seeing what people have done to make a stand in a marina or something like that. Either way i think it would be a cool thing to show whats happening near the ocean. Just wondering? Greetings from apocalyptic sunny florida!

Greg

That's what I'm saying as well! A full dose of the coast this issue, and it's looking all right. Cleared of walkers and wreckage. So we'll give you what you want, but never exactly how you want it... like a deal with the Devil.

Well... not exactly.

Dear The Walking Dead Team,

First off, I would like to say well done with the comics. I just love this new story arch it's getting into, and I can't wait to see how it unfolds. Anyway, I just read issue 137 and I knew all along Lydia would play Carl like she is. Pretty girl, horny teenage boy— it was obvious. I just was not expecting that she would lick his eye sockets and have sex with him out in the open next to a chicken coop. Personally I think Sophia and Carl should be a thing. They were so cute in the beginning holding hands at the prison in front of the walkers...okay now I'm reminiscing to back when Glenn was alive. I'm going to stop before I cry. All I want to know is what is her angle. Is she trying to get Carl to let her go back to her walkie-talkie friends or does she want to take over the Hilltop with her people? I NEED TO KNOW!!

Me too! However I don't feel comfortable with the shipping of minors.

I would also like to say that I hate that bastard, Gregory. He was a horrible leader and now he's trying to kill Maggie Green!?!? What an asshole. Does he really think that killing Maggie will make everything okay for him? He's a dumbass. Rick basically runs their little community and would never let him back in charge, especially if he kills Maggie. I know she's not actually dead because she is going to be on the cover of issue 140. Or is she?

She is. She's well and alive.

And finally, I'm not going to ask about Michonne like every other reader, but I do want to know how Negan will fit into this story arch. Is he going to help them fight the walkie talkies and earn their trust? Or is he going to help them? Or is he going to stay in his cell until all of this is over? I just can't wait so long. I want to know!

I'm also really anxious to see if you'll do anything for issue 150 like you did in issue 75. Any chance of a hint?

You'll just have to wait and find out!

I could go on and on about your amazing series, but you probably don't want to read my rambling. Keep up the good work in the books and the TV show (Season 5 is awesome by the way. I'm still a little angry about the back-to-back deaths of Beth and Tyrese though).

Diana

Eh... it's tough for us to lose those characters, too, but that's kind of what we all signed up for, you know? That's what makes it THE WALKING DEAD, y'know?

First of all, I love The Walking Dead! After seeing season 1 on AMC I was hooked, and not long after I purchased Compendium 1. When Compendium 2 was published I went out and bought that too. For a long time, I only read Compendium 1. I've always been caught up with the TV show, and didn't want to spoil the surprise of something big happening in live action.

During the mid-season break for season 5, I couldn't take it anymore; I caved. I reread Compendium 1 and went straight to Compendium 2. But it wasn't enough. I needed more! I bought volumes 17-22 (over time, I ain't rich), then all the individual comics and I can now proudly say I'm all caught up at issue 137!

That's really awesome to hear! I love stories like that.

What a journey it has been for our band of survivors! Every unexpected twist, turn, and tragedy has shaped them into such amazing characters. I know in the letter hacks a lot of people complain about the decisions you make, but so far I absolutely love everything (except killing off Abraham, I can't forgive you for that!).

There's always a catch.

Now to the main reason I'm actually writing! I've seen a lot of speculation online that the Whisperers story will probably be wrapped up in 138. Most people whose comments or posts I've read seem happy about it, but I sincerely hope the opposite! There's still so much we don't know about them! To wrap all that up in just one issue, to me at least, just doesn't seem like enough. I'm fully expecting either some kind of resolution or escalation with the double hostage situations, but I really hope we see more of this crazy group either way! They're definitely the most interesting group our survivors have come in contact with.

Don't listen to those Internet looneys. Pay attention to us, the printed looneys. So yeah, the Whisperers will be around for at least another issue.

Maybe even TWO!

Again, I just want to praise you all for yours AMAZING work over the years! Mr. Kirkman, Mr. Adlard, Mr. Mackiewicz, and everyone else over at Image who is involved with the production of this fabulous comic! Thank you all so much for this amazing comic!

Sara Connaughton
Massachusetts

Let's all give a big round of applause for Jonathan Chan who has been doing the production on this series over at Image since issue 19.

As he likes to remind us, he showed up the same time Michonne did.

I should also note that Jonathan is currently waiting for this letters column, on a Friday, so that this issue can go to press.

I need to hurry!

Sorry, Jonathan!

PREVIOUSLY: Maggie releases him from his cell, but he returns to give Lydia a parting gift: his cowboy hat.

HIS COWBOY HAT? HIS COWBOY HAT??? It's not a freakin' cowboy hat! It's probably the most iconic piece of Walking Dead history

out there. I work at a Pop Culture Museum and that is exactly the kind of artifact that I'd be proud to display in our Museum because it has that kind of intense and meaningful history that goes with it. That hat means something to people. It's not a cowboy hat. It's his dad's Sheriff's hat, symbolizing Power, Protection, Strength, Security, Maturity and ultimately Family Bonds! It was passed down from Rick to Carl as a gesture of Love and Faith and to reduce it to calling it just a cowboy hat...well, I'm just speechless.

I still love you guys but SERIOUSLY...a cowboy hat?

Jez Louise...

Michael Solof
Collection and Exhibits Manager at Geppi's Entertainment Museum
Baltimore, Maryland

MY BAD! I could probably bullshit for a paragraph and put some spin on it so that I'm right and you're wrong... but you're right and I'm wrong. Glad those Previouslys don't get printed in the trades. Also... do you guys also have Michonne's broadsword on display?

What should we have said?

Dear Letter Hacks,

I understand why Rick and Carl live near Washington DC as that is where the story has taken them. However would there be better places for them to live? That part of America is probably the most densely populated which means more zombies, it also has freezing weather which slow zombies down.

According to a report from 2012, the DC metro area is the 12th densest metropolitan area in the US. (Atlanta didn't even make the top 50!) Glad to be right about something again!

Doesn't the cold weather preserves zombies better by forcing them to hibernate when they are frozen, like putting meat in a freezer. What about zombies in other environments? Would the heat of a desert sun fry their brain or would they rot faster in a tropical/humid climate?

Kind regards,

Jason,

Kwinana, Western Australia

We may never know... unless our group goes there... or unless AMC does more companion shows. We'll see.

But zombies would react to different climates the same way human bodies do. So the desert frying the brain of a zombie is totally a possibility.

Dear Kirkman and Co,

I just finished reading issue 137. I for one am glad that Carl finally got what i always wanted to happen to him. Being 13, I always wanted to be Carl, and now I feel really happy. With that being said, I have a question.

I hope it has nothing to do with sex...

Does the Hilltop Colony run on electricity also?

Whew...

Actually... the Hilltop runs on sex.

Being that Carson managed to save the bullies, it would have been really hard to keep them alive without any.

Also, it would be cool if Sophia found out about Carl and Lydia doing it, she goes onto a revenge killing spree and kills Lydia. That would be a good story arc. Well thats all for now, take care everyone.

I don't want to judge your fantasies, but not all women engage in catfights over the affections of a man.

P.S. - Is it weird if i get turned on by the whole licking the eye socket thing?

As long as you don't turn this into some quest to fulfill it to the detriment of all your other relationships in life... cool. Or just let it be a unicorn?

Stan Mathers
from Chicago, Illinois

I'm going to ignore the last part of this letter.

Dear Robert Kirkman,

For the love of god, please make an action figure for the comic book version of Tyreese. I will literally throw money at you! I don't know if you will read this but i swear, the need for this figure is almost enough for me to get someone to chop my head off with a katana. Cheers!

Jonathan Harrison
Philadelphia, PA

We'll get to him eventually, but did you see the new series of

McFarlane comic figures announced last month? A New Beginning Jesus, badass Carl, Abraham, and a thing called Pin Cushion Zombie, which has just about every weapon used to kill a walker sticking into it. Pretty cool.

Greetings,

What a dirty little eye-hole licker the new girl has turned out to be. I wonder if Carl will return the gesture if Sophia claws Lydia's eyes out.

Sincerely,
Jordanna
Lexington, KY

Jeez, not you, too, Jordanna!

And from Lexington?! Oh, man... not Lexington.

Robert Kirkman,

I started reading the comics back in 2009. I was a teen and struggling with me being gay, I was too afraid to let anyone know. And at the time I got to reading the part of the comics that introduced Aaron. I never was able to relate to a gay character before as much as I related to Aaron. It was the first time I found myself in a character completely, and that it was okay and normal to be gay. Reading Aaron and Eric's story made life easier for me. I'm talking about Aaron now of course because he was introduced in the TV show just recently, and I couldn't be any more happier. Ross Marquand is perfect for Aaron, and I'm so excited that millions of people get to experience just how amazing and kind Aaron is. I have a question about comic Aaron. We haven't seen much of him since All Out War, and the past current issues have shown that Jesus and Alex have somewhat parted ways. My question is will we see more of Aaron soon and is he in a relationship with Jesus? Keep up the good work Robert and thank you.

- Hayden
Missouri

This letter is why all the people who got their feathers ruffled over Aaron's introduction on the show can go fuck themselves.

Anyway... thanks for writing, Hayden. It does appear that Aaron and Jesus are both single, but whether or not they end up together for any length of time remains to be seen. So stay tuned!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'm not sure if this has been brought up in previous Letter Hacks or not. But, this just came up in a conversation I had with my friend the other day. We were both wondering if someone who was paralyzed (before or after the outbreak) had died and turned, would they be able to walk despite being a paraplegic before they reanimated. For example, when Rick ran over Martinez in the Comics and Lamson in the TV Show, he broke both of their backs, ultimately paralyzing them. If The Governor hadn't amputated Caesar's head, and Rick shoot Bob in the head, would they have been able to come back as a walker and the virus sort of gives them mobility back, or would they not be able to move at all still and just lay there? Thanks!

Sincerely,

Your friend Matt
St. Clair, MI

They would still be paralyzed. Zombies are just a nervous system operating a dead body. That nervous system couldn't improve and suddenly send signals to body parts it couldn't when the person was alive.

- 1.) Carl gets all the bitches. More bitches then Rosita has men.
- 2.) As soon as Lydia took off his glasses I started chanting "lick it. Lick it. Lick it." In my head.
- 3.) I literally yelled "YASSSS!!!" When she licked it.
- 4.) Carl losing his virginity is more satisfying than when Harry Potter finally got it in.

I'm a black, 28 year old, relatively attractive, single mother, dominatrix and TWD is my favorite everything.

Miss Princess Candy

She ordered me to print the letter. So I did.

You do good work, Sean.

We're back in two weeks, where you'll get more Michonne, and what's better than that? More of everyone else!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Woo! See you all then.

Jonathan Chan... take it away!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I goddamn love when Charlie gets to kick ass on a two-page spread, and seeing the Whisperer camp nails it. Also... what the hell is Negan about to do? I mean, seriously...

Wouldn't you like to know! (Actually... next issue is already done... so we all already know, don't we? Poor readers... having to wait weeks for these things.)

Letters?!

Wait, no! Before we do that, I want to thank the diehard core audience that reads these things. We're in a pretty crazy hot streak here that has lasted way longer than I ever thought it would. Sales on the comic are actually still ticking up... with recent issues creating a new baseline of sales. And ratings on the show have been consistently up for the second half of season 5... which is pretty much unheard of at this point in a TV show's life. I never lose sight of the fact that this all started with you fine people. I don't often enough take the time to stop and thank all of you for the years of support you've dedicated to this title. I hope we'll all be here together for years to come. THANKS!

Now... letters. I might even try to be a little nicer this month.

What up?

Buzzing in from Trinidad to say that after being a bit disappointed by the last couple of issues, (move the story along, please!) I thought that 138 was pretty...

Well, it was...

Rad.

Kydra Venus
Trinidad

Are we seriously attempting to go with this gimmick again? I know it's called Letter HACKS... but we are totally better than repeating such a hacky joke. ...I damn well fucking hope.

I'm not touching this one.

Hi Walking Dead Crew!

I just finished issue #138, it was great! I'm excited to see Carl going out on his own adventure, good to see he still doesn't do what he's told.

I was wondering if there were any plans on making some stuff specifically about the Whisperers (a book, comic, game, musical... whatever). I'm a fan of the books about the Governor, and like others would like to see something about Negan, but I think I'd rather hear about how the Whisperers came to be.

Keep it up, and you should release two issues a month more often!

Andrew
Lancaster, PA

The primary way to learn about the Whisperers for now is the comic. And with shots of their camp this issue, there's still plenty to come. It's going to be...

good shit.

Nicely done. See... I'm being SO nice.

So, is that Alpha carrying the shotgun in issue 132 that takes Dante hostage and apparently already has Ken hostage or is it another Whisperer that happens to be carrying a double barrel shotgun? It's driving me crazy since the build of the whisperer looks like that of a man and has different clothes on compared to what Alpha was wearing when they did the person exchange at the Hilltop.

Cheers,

Drew

There's been some speculation and to clear it up, yes, that absolutely is Alpha, for all you first appearance geeks out there.

Yes, that's totally Alpha... and what the heck are you talking about looking like a man? Look at those eyes! Also... all you can really see is her shoulder.

Hi, Kirkman and Fwends!

First of all, thanks for creating that great comic. The storytelling is better and better since the All Out War arc. Don't pay attention to those crybabies who complain that "It's not 'No One is Safe' anymore". It has never been "No One is Safe". The characters you need to advance your story ARE indeed safe for the time you need them to bring the story where you want to bring it. If that was not the case, you'd be totally stupid for voluntarily fucking up your own story and you sure are not. The thing is only you and Charlie, not us readers, know which characters are safe and until when. And it's your prerogative to do what you goddamn want, you are the author of this book. Even if I'm still suspecting you pandered a bit too much to the Shiva haters by killing the tiger very soon after saying in these Letter HACKs that it would be there for a while. I know, you said you didn't pander to the Shiva haters but I don't believe you on this. Anyway... A few comments... and questions...

Is it so hard to believe that I would say something misleading in the letters column to misdirect readers?! I do that ALL THE TIME!

Alpha... Why does she shave her head? Lice? Do the other whisperers shave their heads too or is it just her? Lydia obviously doesn't. Is it only the adults? And is Alpha her real name or did she make it up? I get that she hasn't a last name yet. Please make it be Boucher! PleasePleasePleasePleasePlease! Alpha Boucher, that would be so great! What about Magna? Real name or she made that up? Don't worry, I won't ask for a Magna Carta. An Alpha Boucher would be just fine ;)

Alpha is made up... it's a name she gave herself. You'll find out more soon. Magna is her real name. Her last name is Nimous and Alpha's last name is Betsoup.

No really. Both of those are true.

Seeing that the fair is coming and the weather seems to be fine on the cover of #142, I hope you order Charlie a lot of girls in shorts! I'm still sad that we never see Rosita in her short shorts anymore... Does she still have them? I understand that they won't fit anymore pretty soon but...

Ah... And thanks for showing us Andrea in short shorts recently. Rosita had filled a void, being the only girl in short shorts in the comic. You have gay characters, latino, black, asian, handicapped characters, but not enough girls in short shorts! An important part of society is missing! Lydia in short shorts would be fine BTW, cutest character you ever made... But please no short shorts made of zombie flesh. Would be gross even for that publication!

Thanks from Canada,

Frances MacLeod
Municipalite d'Aubert-Gallion, QC
Canada

I don't even know what to say. A short shorts enthusiast? Flesh shorts is a pretty good idea... we'll get right on that.

Oh Captain! My, Captain! -

(For me, this covers only 3 great men- Mr. Walt Whitman, the amazingly talented Robin Williams and of course, our dear Capt. Kirk himself!)

I want to ask about how the "whisperers" suits are made? How could they possibly sew rotting flesh unless they tanned the skins into leather first? If this was done, it should be obvious that they are just suits, I would think?

Love & Body Parts!
Cheryl Lingerfelt
Skipwith, VA

They are washed, but not tanned. They do not last long. The suits, y'know... decay after a while. If you look at the big shot of their camp in this issue, you can see a bit of that process. More on that later.

Hi, Walking Dead PPL:

So it's a rainy Saturday morning on St. Patrick's day weekend, and everyone I know is discussing what they're drinking tonight, and I can only discuss what's going on with the Walking Dead. And for the longest time there have been three matters I've always wanted clarified:

1. Why haven't nuclear power plants melted down yet? There are numerous nuclear reactors along the east coast, in particular Virginia (where our characters reside) and presumably abandoned or taken over by walkers. The power is out in the main land, so no one is manning these now aging reactors at these plants. So I'd like to know if nuclear walkers are on the horizon.

I'd imagine there are emergency protocols for nuclear reactors... and it's too late in the day for me to get lost in a Google hole... So yeah, safeguards. Lots of safeguards in the event of emergency. But maybe there is a fucking crater somewhere in the States and we just haven't gotten to it. (Shout out to my hometown power plant, Pilgrim Nuclear Station. We ran emergency drills in case you melted down and I've forgotten them all. So it goes.)

Yeah... safeguards...

2. What's going on with the astronauts aboard the ISS station orbiting Earth? Are they trapped up there? Are they dead? And more importantly, are they walkers? Does the walker pandemic exist in space? That would give more insight if walkers are only an isolated incident or not. I've always wanted to see a story open with a picture of the Earth and then you see an astronaut floating in orbit, and then a close up on the astronaut and it's a zombie astronaut.

Go read Y the Last Man. They deal with this stuff there and it's pretty cool. That book was the Saga before Saga was fucking Saga. (I'm swearing more and I can't fucking help it. That Negan thing just got me all...)

Yeah... answering this would reveal too much about the origins of the zombie apocalypse... which I have no intention of doing. I've already said too much.

3. Do you foresee a character in this universe that is resistant to the walkers? World War Z touched on this concept a bit where zombies wouldn't attack people with terminal diseases. Since walkers are an un-explainable phenomenon, is there a human with an un-explainable power that the walkers would not instinctively attack or actually flee from? The human in question is not wearing walker flesh to disguise themselves from the walkers. He or she can just walk right through a horde unharmed and the walkers quickly would move out of their way or even cower and cover their faces or eyes out of

a fearful instinct that this human is a predator, like a mouse or a rabbit would when a predator approaches. An interesting character development for the walkers.

Not only that, but this human cannot become a walker either. They can die naturally and walkers won't even bite him. This unique human can even stop someone from becoming a walker through some sort of fluid transmission like spitting into someone's walker bite or a blood transfusion. Ever see the movie "Day Breakers?" You'll know what I mean.

I hope not.

That idea is neat and all, and has been done in numerous other zombie stories... so for that and various other reasons, you'll never see it in TWD.

Anyway I think about walkers too much. And I hope Alpha and Negan become an item eventually in the story. Keep doing amazing things with this epic comic series.

John

I think you're the first person shipping Negan and Alpha. Nealpha? Alphagan?

Hi!!

So, my boyfriend keeps bitching about this, but never writes to y'all when I tell him to, so I'll just do it for him. :)

In the show, Sasha slices through a zombie and it cuts Abraham's arm. In the comics, Negan (our future German Shepherd's name) and his men rub their weapons in walker filth to infect anyone they attack. It proved successful in the comic, however it obviously doesn't in the show. Happily so, because I love Abraham and his "mother dick" shouting self!! So.... How come??

One last thing, I wrote in one other time and asked briefly why Andrea sucked so badly in the show, but now I see that Sasha is the new Andrea, and I think it's rad. Yup, after the letter hacks in issue 138, I'm bringing rad back.

Much love,

Samantha Savory
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Normally we don't run show questions, but this was on my radar, too... and I damn well want an answer.

Stay tuned...

TWDers,

Okay, never wrote in to comment on this comic/story/phenomenon, but I think that now's the time to thank you for such a deep and involving narrative.

But you are now breaking my heart...

I am, of course, referring to #138 and that double-page spread of Carl and Lydia looking back at each other before they go back to their communities. I had my doubts about her, but this feels real. All the deaths, losses, near misses and mutilations I have seen in this incredible story, and this is what really gets to me...

Am I an old man now?

Or just a sentimental fool. Can't call it.

Anyway, keep it coming...

P. S. Michonne is on a yacht in the Caribbean Sea wondering why anyone sticks with dry land anymore!

KD

See you next month, when we see some more fucking NEGAN. Can't wait!

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be motherfucking Negan fucktastic!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Oh man, are we in a crazy stretch of THE WALKING DEAD. The end of this issue, the end of next issue, the end of the issue after THAT... whooo boy... you all are in for a treat.

Don't spoil things for the people, Sean! But yes... very cool things ahead. Let's get into the letters before you give it all away.

Dear Kirkman & Co.

You put me on a roller coaster of emotion in issue 139. The first freaking page! Walker heads are flying! We see the katana! (Which should have a name by the way. Or maybe it does and I don't know about it)

I could practically hear the combined disappointed sighs of the comic community around the world on Wednesday as they turn to the second page and see Ezekiel wielding the katana.

Heh, heh.

Not to say I don't like Ezekiel. He's cool. Not as cool as Shiva, but cool. But we wanted Michonne. And you knew that, you bastard.

Then a few pages later you give her to us. And, let me say, you made up for that tease.

MICHONNE IS A F*CKING PIRATE.

You found a way to make Michonne cooler. I applaud you Kirkman, and you too, Charlie. But not you Sean.

Yours in alliance,

Johnny

I don't deserve any credit, Johnny! You're not gonna ruin my day!

Yeah, I was going to argue that she wasn't a pirate, but really there's not any way around it. She's on the boat, she has the look... okay, she's a pirate. But Sean definitely deserves no credit... Stefano, on the other hand...

Hey Robert and Sean,

I have a question about Negan that has plagued my mind for about 791 days. In issue 108,

Negan is show kicking the ass out of someone in ping-pong. I was wondering if Negan was doing so well because he is actually skilled at ping-pong, or if his opponents just let Negan win because they are scared of him.

Thanks for reading.

M. Nolan
Ontario, Canada

Since Ping-Pong is one of the last recreational activities to survive the apocalypse (at least in these parts), I think he's just become really good at it. (You can get really good at anything if it's the only thing left to do...) And he probably wouldn't dig it if people were taking it easy on him... because he's an ultra-competitive dick.

Negan would be super angry if he found out people were letting him win. They'd never risk that.

Dear Robert and TWD team,

Just read issue 139 and I am SO RELIEVED that Michonne is back!!! Angst fest all around! I like the concept of sea travel, and the fishing trips they are being taken! Will the communities ever set up fisheries or fish farms so that they won't have to take long trips out to sea? Will we ever 'sea' some sea travel in the comics in time? That'd be rad! Love the comic and love you all for all the great work!

Forever a Dead-Head!
Andrew Tiscareno
El Paso, Texas

We'll definitely be seeing some sea travel sooner than you think.

Avast ye Scallywags!

Michonne is back, on a boat and kinda looks like a pirate. Mystery solved! So, I know that doing this could essentially end the comic for good...but why hasn't anyone considered sending a small group to an island, clearing it of walkers then relocating everyone there for good? Or at least relocating on the island long enough for the walkers on the mainland to wither and die. If the group is looking for a safe place free of the threat of walkers and evil

humans, wouldn't an island miles from the coast be the best place? Maybe I should be leading these fools...

Jared
Gainesville, FL

It's a solid defense, but does it have the natural resources (fresh water, arable land, etc.) to sustain a moderately sized population? If an infection occurs, wouldn't it spread quicker? I don't know. It sounds as problematic as any other solution.

Right, and they're actually getting along pretty nicely on their own now. So unless something terrible happens to shake things up (uh-oh), then they wouldn't really feel the need to locate to a safer place.

Dear Kirkman and Co.,

I absolutely love all your work, so thanks for that! Being that I don't have any major complaints about the series I'll vent a small one that's been buggin' me for a while now. Jesus' top knot? Really? Haha I know it seems somewhat trivial, but Jesus is such a bad ass character that it's hard to swallow seeing him rock a hipster hair style. He wore his hair down for so long and whooped plenty off ass without it obstructing his vision so I don't think that's it. Oh well, if the worst thing I have to deal with is a crappy hairstyle (though I'm noticing a trend after Carl's emo tear catcher) then I you guys are Doug better than most give us credit for. Thanks!

Sean from Los Angeles

Bah... it's more samurai inspired than anything. Or maybe like some really cool Brazilian guy that plays soccer and you don't want him talking to your girl at a party and you've always got to keep your eye on him. Regardless, you make the decision to grow your hair that long, you're gonna do some crazy, questionable shit with it.

Also, when we introduced it, he was going out to deal with a herd, knowing he could be surrounded by hundreds of zombies. He wouldn't want to give them anything to grab onto if he could help it. And maybe he liked it. Doesn't it look cool? I'm growing my hair out right now. I'm hoping I'll be able to have a top knot by Comic-Con.

I don't know how things work in your Zombie world, but Seriously Robert Kirkman, put a couple fresh fish in your fridge and see how they smell after a week or four. How long has Michonne been out on that boat??? collecting a "haul" of fish?? and what do you think that boat even SMELLS like after it rolls back into harbor, with fish rotting in it's hull as she then chooses the moment to reflect on her relationships instead of unloading a rapidly decaying cargo? Have they been around Zombies so long they don't even notice? Do they smoke the fish? do they sun dry? is the boat all lopsided from them being in Buckets? Does that junker have a fridge? Is it a metaphorical plot device I've spent far too much time thinking about? Better yet Will it bring a flotilla of zombie Skin wearing or cannibalistic pirate boats following them? Whatever, but if you ever invite to a barbecue at your place, I now

have serious food safety issues and will bring my own Box of Veggie burgers.

I'm aware that fish will die and rot. They kept that from happening on the boat.

The ominous line "Should Andrea Be worried", Yes, there's an anniversary issue coming up, everyone in the whole comic should be worried!!! Lull before the storm !!

Lull?! We'll show you a fucking lull these next couple of issues, Ken!

Will Negan escape? Will he resume HIS role as "THE ALPHA" and knock out the other one? Will he obviously have to live long enough to meet up with Carl and hilariously congratulate him on losing his virginity? Has Walking Dead turned this whole thing, briefly into one seriously demented 80's teen movie? Or will "Horror Movie Rules" win out ? and sex is met with, well, Swift and merciless Anniversary issue ratings shattering death? Whatever the case, the silent Maggie panel after The " first piece of Ass..it'll make you do crazy shit" line was another classic of TWD comedy gold. Simple, but absolutely hilarious.

KEN/ SAN FRANCISCO

Oh, is issue 150 coming up? I hadn't noticed.

Greetings from Australia!

So there goes season 5 of AMC's The Walking Dead, eh? I must ask, where the heck is Heath or Denise? Seriously, I haven't seen them alllll season!! Now onto the video game by TellTale, got any secrets willing to tell us about Season 3, hm? Spill the beans, dude!

There should be more news in the near future. Probably from a stage in San Diego.

It'd be pretty lame if we didn't have Heath or Denise in the show, wouldn't it?

Now this has been bothering me for a while, do you know if Carl will lose an eye in the TV series? It's really been itching me to know. Thanks for answering Robert, you amazing sonofabitch!

From Will

You'll just have to watch and find out! Season 6 starts in a few short months!

Next month we take down Gregory's corpse and have not one, but TWO issues for you. Who loves ya?

-Sean Mackiewicz

Spoilers, Sean! Jeez! Two issues again?! That's insane! Why... that would mean our big COMPENDIUM VOLUME THREE will be in stores in... OCTOBER just in time for Season 6 of the TV show! (And just a reminder, FEAR THE WALKING DEAD's six episode first season will air BEFORE then!) Fun times. See you back here next issue!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Oh jeezus... OH jeezus... what is SHE doing there?

Yeah, that's crazy. What could happen next?! Oh, I know... a letters column!

EXCITING!

Holy fucking fuck, my wait is finally fucking over. Just what we fucking needed, MORE NEGAN!! I just finished issue 140 (can you tell?) and I can not wait to see where this is going to go. You know how they made Better Call Saul to show how Saul became Saul? I would abso-fucking-lutely read a comic about how Negan became fucking Negan. I'll be counting down the days until 141!

PS. Is it strange how much I fucking love such an evil villain?

Jordan Mrozek
Calgary, Alberta

Call up AMC, let's make it happen. But what's the show called then, Motherfucking with Negan? Fuck You, Watch Me? Cock of the Walk(ing Dead)?

Sean. Yeesh.

Oh, that's right. You only like titles with one word in them. So, "Negan" it is.

Dear team of reasons for me to continue living, I have a few questions for you to clear up for me if you can, firstly, do you think that Robert or Charlie should pay for a new iPad, as I dropped mine in shock when I saw what Olivia did with Negan's cell door?

No. Not because they're not generous, but you sound like the type that will probably do it again. You've probably dropped your phone in the toilet before, right?

Also, I don't believe you...

Secondly, is Negan capable of curtailing his urge towards lawful evil, perhaps with a chance of becoming a sergeant at arms of the local police force?

No fucking way Rick gives him that chance, right?

Finally, why is Negan nowhere to be seen in the tv show, is it because non comic readers don't deserve access to such fascinating characters with so much room for development that they would be wasted on the washed masses?

TV show's not at that point yet. We still haven't even seen Heath or Jesus or Gregory. Patience, my dude.

Exactly.

Did I emphasise just how highly myself and everyone I've told think of your collective genius? Because if I haven't, I'm doing a disservice. Never stop, the dead should walk forever!

Regards
Shabazz

I'm assuming that last comment is for Sean. Your praise is WAY off base.

To Kirkman and team,

I have been reading the comics since issue # 1 and through all the story lines I have wondered how would I react in the Zombie Apocalypse? My girlfriend and I have have talked about this since we also watch the show, and I have one lingering question that may or may have not been touched on. What happens to people of the Prozac nation. Since every one in one way or another are prescribed one thing or another, where are all the ADHD, ADD, obsessive compulsives in the world? In my book these are the people who would adapt differently and possibly end up running certain things. At least I would!

Prozac Nation Citizen
Bobby V

Frankly, the "I need medication, we need to go on a mission to get it" is such a contrived post-apocalyptic story piece that's done over and over... I've actually avoided medicated people for pretty much the entire run.

Which makes no sense... but it is what it is.

Hey what's up guys,

From the way Rick and Michonne talk about the fair it seems like its happening soon, also the cover for 142 kinda looks like the fair. But back in 127 when Andrea and Rosita are talking to Sadiq about construction, she says the fair is two months away still.

There's no way its already been two months since 127, more like a week or two at most. So, like, what's up with that? Just an error, or am I missing something?

By the way, love what your doing with that fucker Negan! And bring back Dwight!

Stevie

It's been two months. It takes time to travel, stuff like that.

Yeah... time passes without people saying "it's been two days since" or "man, yesterday was boring, nothing happened." We just skip "yesterday" when it's boring.

Did Olivia just insinuate Negan has a small dick?
Is that what the war was all about?

Ethan Tompkins

Isn't that what all wars are about?

Nice work, Sean.

Loving the new storyline and can't wait to see where you take Alpha!

Negan gets out of jail and it's because the locking mechanism didn't work properly, ummmmm ok. What was second choice; having him reel in the key to the cell Brady Bunch Ghost Town style??? Was expecting something a little more to it than that but regardless I am eagerly awaiting the next issue!

Kudos!

Patrick Ray
West Hartford, CT

We could have had him dangling a chicken bone for a dog...

I am writing this fan mail on behalf of all the fans who are piecing this together. You are turning them into pirates. Boats, Carl's eyepatch, Rick's hook hand. Why didn't you leave Dale with the peg leg?

Brady

Too obvious. Didn't want to give the game away so soon.

Yeargh... they be onto me.

Hey,

In what fucking way is Gregory more dangerous than Negan in that he has to be killed but Negan doesn't?

I call bullshit.

Josh from New Brunswick, Canada

Different leaders, different decisions. We'll just have to see how it affects Rick and Maggie's relationship down the line.

People supported and trust Gregory. Negan has lost all support. No one backs him or thinks he shouldn't be in jail.

It's pretty simple.

Hi Walking Dead People!

First time writer here, so I might as well say how much I love the comic, I've been happily collecting them since the Larger World arc issue by issue. So, here's a few questions.

How do the Whisperers keep cattle alive? Even if they're disguised as roamers, wouldn't the real ones go for animals anyway?

Not if they keep the roamers away.

Also, what's the deal with the Carson brothers? I might just be missing something here, but I never really understood why one of them was with Negan and one of them was at the Hilltop. Did Negan take one of them away from the Hilltop or something?

Keep doing you,
Cal
Cincinnati, Ohio

That's exactly what happened. Negan liked non-doctor Carson... and made him his assistant. Did I never get around to explaining that in the book? Damn.

Hey guys,

I had a couple questions to run by you,
1. Eugene is one of my favorite characters! He is the ideal apocalyptic nerd! But we haven't heard from him since he discovered Rosita was pregnant. How is Eugene going to deal with this? Will he ever figure out who the father is? What kind of dad is he going to be? Is he going to be able to care for the kid, or freak out every time it spits up?

More on Eug very soon.

2. What's going on with Father Gabriel? I love how he brings a religious aspect to the series, but he hasn't done much. Can we expect more from him in future issues?

Yes.

3. How have the Saviors changed since Negan's capture? Have they improved under Dwight's leadership?

Apparently, they're still a bunch of weirdos. Just not aggressively so. More like, "Do we HAVE to invite them to the fair?"

Thanks guys,
Bradley Franks

Yeah, we'll see the Sanctuary and more of the Saviors very soon.

Dudes,

I've spent an inordinate amount of time worrying about the agricultural economy of Alexandria, Hilltop, etc. Tell me, Robert, have you put any thought to this? As far as I can tell the communities have basically large kitchen gardens. Vegetables are super inefficient - barley, wheat, sorghum, etc are what civilization was built on.

This isn't a huge issue, except for the fact that all the farming seems to be going on inside each communities' walls. Obviously there's some wheat being milled, but with such a small area no more than one acre could be devoted to growing wheat. Assuming that they are using vaguely modern seeds and crop rotation methods, they still can't be making much better than a 4 to 1 crop yield. That's only about 300 lbs flour/year. Just ignoring the limited land issue, with that sort of production something like ~80% of a community needs to be engaged in agriculture in order to support Sutton, Rick, the riders, and all the other specialists. Even allowing for seas teeming with fish and Michonne angling her butt off, there would still need to be a huge amount of real farming going on.

Don't jump on me for pedantry! Rick is obsessed with rebuilding civilization (and the Whisperers are direct foils to that). Daniel Webster said, "where tillage begins, other arts follow. Farmers are therefore the founders of human civilization." Without real agriculture, Rick's project is as doomed to the primitive as were the aborigines of Australia.

Harry
Denver

ps And even if the communities are producing sufficient food, they're still all doomed to unequal/feudal society. Equality rationing doesn't allow the surplus needed to outfit warriors. And specialists like Sutton or Eugene will be able to demand extra resources if they wise up.

I love letters like these, so don't expect me to attack you. I've put a lot of thought into how they're getting by and what exactly they're doing... but an issue all about farming isn't exactly going to go well.

Just like the fair is happening outside the walls (which is how Alpha was able to just slip in), more and more there will be other things outside the walls of the various communities... that would include large areas of farm land.

Greetings:

Having grown up in a beach town in Maryland I have a few zombie vs. ocean questions.

1. Waves can be very loud and a fog horn can be heard for miles. Since zombies are attracted to noise and an undertow is a powerful thing, is the ocean full of zombies?

Heh. Stay tuned.

2. Shiva could live off zombie flesh so I'm guessing ocean animals can as well? How much of the brain must a crab eat before the zombie ceases to function?

Exactly 64%.

3. Does the fishing boat ever haul in a zombie along with the catch?

All the time.

My non-ocean question is this. The folks living in this zombie invested world all seem to have remarkably clear skin. You would think the stress alone would cause a break out. Is this a clue to the origin of the zombie virus? An experiment to cure unsightly blemishes that went really wrong?

You're onto me. Also, Charlie Adlard has a bias toward clear skinned people.

And finally, I'm sure you're a big headline event down in San Diego but could you do something special for us Thursday /Friday morning comic-con people. Please don't let those weekend F-wads have all the fun.

Thank you for all the good times.
Jeff D. Wolf
Santa Monica, CA

Don't worry, Skybound will be well represented every day of SDCC. Check Skybound.com for signing, panel and exclusives updates. It's going to be a packed event for all of us, and we'll try not to disappoint any of you... whether you're a weekday or weekend F-wad.

We'll be back in two weeks. Go ride your bikes or whatever until then.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Or skateboard... that's cool, too. But fuck roller skates. See you soon!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I'm not sure we even have a term for whatever's bigger than a herd. That is by far the largest concentration of walkers we've ever seen, right? We've seen Rick's crew practice their herding techniques, but this is massive, yeah? Yeesh...

This is a HORDE... and what does it mean for the future? Holy heck. Things are starting to get serious.

Now for some serious letters!

Hello from Texas!

I just read issue 141 and man I'm so happy Gregory is dead! Seriously, that dude was a dick. But it makes me wonder, why did Maggie allow him to die by hanging? Did she get the idea from Rick when he wanted to hang Thomas at the prison? It just seems so wrong, did she feel he wasn't worth a bullet? And why in public? I don't think seeing a man being hung on a tree is high on anyone's priority, even if he is an asshole. And didn't she think of the risk of him turning right after he died? Is Maggie just so stressed out after what's happened with Sophia, the Whisperers, and Gregory that she's not thinking clearly? Anyway, keep up the great work!

From Henry

She was trying to send a public message, the kind of message only a public hanging can send. She wanted people to see the terrible fate that awaits anyone who, y'know... tries to kill her. Maggie is a hard ass... we'll be seeing more of this side of her moving forward.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and TWD crew,
Finished reading #141 today and WOW! Finally we're free of Gregory! I know it's cold but I'm (not) sorry, he had to go. Wow Maggie works fast doesn't she! Just last issue she says Gregory has to die and BOOM! he's dead! I kind of wish we could've seen the trial leading up to Gregory kicking the bucket.

I think when the judge is the same person you tried to murder, there's no need for a trial.

Yeah, it was pretty straightforward.

I had a question about the rest of Magna's group. Where are they?? They showed up and POOF they're gone! C'mon don't show us a treat and then hide it!

Always a Dead-Head!
Andrew Tiscareno
El Paso, Texas

They're around. We'll be seeing more of them.

Very soon.

Hi Robert,

This is a random question but I was re-reading issue 92 and Jesus refers to Abraham as Mister Beefcake and I know "beefcake" is a gay slang type of word (which Abraham fits) did Jesus mean it that way? Was that the first hint that he was gay? I am convinced it is. I am gay myself and I love Jesus so much.

I'm going to say that it was. Good catch.

Also when are we going to learn Jesus' back story? He's such a cool and badass character and I want to learn more about him. Also have Jesus be with Aaron they both need some love.

Anthony

I am reluctant to just shoehorn my two most prominent gay characters together, as I'd hate to fall into that stereotype of "gay men are attracted to all men." But... there might be a little something going on between these two in the future... so stay tuned.

Hey Kirkman and Friends,
I'm an avid home brewer and longtime fan of this book. I've been thinking, in the zombie apocalypse, a brewer would be incredibly valuable to the community. Beer is often safer to drink than water and it has incredible trade value. And a few town drunks could add new drama, especially if their drunken hijinks leads to a gate being left open or an accidental death and reanimation (drunk zombies?). The community has access to water and grain. Hops are practically a weed once established and yeast is everywhere. Time to introduce the brewer, the life of the party and the heart of a civilized community. AND I would be happy to advise you on the ins and outs of the process for the sake of realism.

Cheers!

Steve Ayres

Seattle

Do you read our comics with a couple in you? We introduced Larry and Louie back in #131, who were crafting some spirits for the fair, and safe to say they dabble in beer as well. Which I'd imagine would be a very invaluable commodity. Though Alexandria's community is probably so productive because they don't drink. Man, we reintroduce booze and things are about to come crashing down soon, huh? Rebuilding society is harder than it looks.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Mr Adlard,
Would you be willing to draw a map or a series of maps of DC and the surrounding areas? That would be so cool. Like, how much is "their territory"? I'd also love to see Negan's former bedroom.

PS. 141 issues in and I still miss Axel.

Chris in Cabot

We talk about doing maps a lot in the office, for this book, for the early America of MANIFEST DESTINY, for the fantasyland in BIRTHRIGHT. We should probably stop talking and start doing.

Yes. We should. And Chris... I hear you, man. You follow me?

Greetings Kirkman and friends!

First of all, want to give major props to you guys. I started reading The Walking Dead proper just last summer and it quickly became one of my favorite stories ever. So once again, thank you. Now for the ugly part: questions and predictions!

I am convinced the new "female villain" being teased in not Alpha as everyone believes, but

Magna. Outside threats have always been a theme in this story: the prison assault, No Way Out, All Out War, etc; characters having to defend what's theirs from those that have come to take all they have. Naturally, one would assume the same with the introduction of the Whisperers and subsequently their camp. But Alpha has shown nothing but civility to our heroes and she makes it clear all they need to do is leave the Whisperers alone and they'll respond in kind.

Does this issue change your opinion any?

If not... stay tuned.

No, I'm sensing an internal threat coming this time. Magna has taken the role of a young Rick while Rick is filling in the shoes of Douglas; even their appearances reflect this! So the roles have reversed. Rick took Alexandria from Douglas, can he hold it when Magna tries to do the same to him? Sure Magna seems compliant, but so did Rick and co. when they first arrived and we all know how THAT story played out. If only there was a fair or something coming up when everyone's guard is down. That'd be the perfect time to usurp the throne... Or maybe I'm wrong and I'll just have to enjoy the actual route the story takes, oh well!

Now for my question: what the motherfucking FUCK was Negan's job before the apocalypse happened? I've always been curious...

Thanks again for all your work guys!

Cheers,

Corey Kelly

He was a used car salesman.

While your theory on Magna is interesting, you're not exactly in the right neighborhood. All the same, I'd keep an eye on Magna as a character... there's some cool stuff coming up.

Negan seems to be trying to gain Rick's trust. But I just can't buy into Rick and Negan getting along, even to save Carl. Negan is an excellent villain, but is just that, a villain. So my question is, will Negan get closer or farther away from redemption for his actions as the story progressing and in doing so will he either become an ally or stay an enemy of Rick's?

Brant

Does Negan even want redemption? I really like how much of a response Negan's latest appearance received. He was mentioned in probably 75% of the mail, which just goes to show you

motherfuckers really didn't want him to die after All Out War afterall.

Ha! Correct! Remember how mad you people were when he didn't die?! Where are all the complaints now?! Negan for life!

As for your questions... I can't answer a single one of them. How terrible would it be if I just told you what was going to happen in the letters column?

Hello All,

This was possibly my favorite issue for seeing Rick go from advice giving father figure to Dwight to pants crappingly scared when he saw Negan in an open cage to metaphorically rubbing Olivia's face in the mess she almost made to weird pillow talk with Andrea.

Speaking of that scene immediately after he explains why he's keeping Negan alive (Btw Negan was pretty spot on about) I could almost here the scary movie orchestra hit. Or should it have been Price is right losing horns? Awesome job Mr. Adlard and Mr. Kirkman for making a book so good it has spawned a soundtrack in my head

I'm thinking the Price is Right horns...

Now for the part of the book that scared the crap out of me more than the hanged man should have; the cover for next issue. It is hands down the most peacefully idyllic, happy scene that has ever adorned the covers of TWD. Every cover for the last 141 issues has caused some degree of stress, This one wins because, dammit, it it's the zombie apocalypse and there cant be that many smiling faces without a price. Their all going to die!! (Their all going to laugh at you!!)

In the past year we gave you an issue titled "Happiness" and there was people being happy in it! Sure, there was killing in it, but a whole lot of smiling, too. There's always a balance.

Things are changing!

I'll be in the corner and whimpering quietly until 142 arrives.

Pete Vasquez
Basking Ridge, NJ

It might not be that bad...

Abominable Kirkman,

Great issue, that 141. One of my absolute favorite issues ever! The writing was superb, the story progression fantastic, and the art as amazing as ever. Congrats to the entire team on a work of art! Alas, that said I have written my letter to you for a different reason, one that is hard to admit.

I have always hated Negan. After all, the moment we meet him he kills one of my favorite characters in the most brutal fashion possible. His snark and quirky profanity laced remarks were always a part of him that I despised, even when they were kinda funny. Then, something strange happened when I was reading issue 141. I realized I fucking love Negan.

YES! We win! Carry on...

This is probably an odd time to make such a discovery, since by now I would think most people have pretty well decided whether they love him or hate him. But myself, I was in denial of what I did like about him due to my overwhelming hatred of what he had done. He couldn't break through my perception of him until he started talking thanksgiving turkey ass. At that point, I couldn't deny it anymore. Negan is fucking hilarious, and he damn sure knows it. Rick puppet? Fucking classic. Love it. But I think what really helped turn around my opinion was his speech, and how right he was about Rick. He's right about himself being a tough son of a bitch, too. And who knows, one day he might build up enough trust with Rick that he actually comes to him for help with another issue (say, the whisperers having his son) and then he'll have the drop on ol' grampa Grimes. Once that day comes, I might go back to hating him, but until then I'm joining the Negan fan club. Although I do still hope Maggie bashes his brains in with Lucille some day!

I think Negan has a better idea of who he is than almost anyone else in the book (except maybe Jesus). That's what allows him to be so decisive, he's sure of himself. Which is not to say that what he does is right at all.

By the way, please oh please don't let anyone convince you to actually make Negan's dick fan club T-shirts for sale on the Skybound website. It would just be...disturbing.

Mark Jackson
Pasadena, TX

Agreed.

Aw, man... okay... fine.

Back in two weeks... right in time for San Diego Comic Con. Talk then! There'll be plenty to talk about!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, issue 144 ships BEFORE San Diego? Good... yeah... that's good. That'll be a fun con. What? No... no reason. Nothing crazy happens in that issue. It's cool. See you all there!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

"Oh. My. God...." – Charlie

"Holy crap" – Stefano

These were our artists' responses after reading the script... which is hopefully what you're feeling right now. I'm honestly not sure what else can be said here, in terms of what Rick and his allies are about to face. But as our partners at Telltale are fond of saying, "No good deed goes unpunished."

I felt like it was a good way to end the third compendium. I love that there are readers who have set themselves up for 4-year cliffhangers.

Onto the letters!

Hey Guys

So I wanted to comment that the Rick / Maggie conversation seemed a little fishy. It felt a little convenient that she neglected to mention that Gregory was executed. Like obviously at first he's way too distracted about Carl, but he calms down when he learns that Gregory tried to kill her, that would have been the expected time to also inform him that they had Gregory executed. Did Maggie do it on purpose??

Yes. Definitely. She's in no hurry to reveal that to him. But also, Rick was pretty much running for Carl at that point.

I really am enjoying this arc, I think it's even better than All Out War, which is something I never thought I'd say.

Thanks for everything in the last 7-8 years of my reading!

Johnny

Here's to at least 7 or 8 more!

It's about time an Arab character was introduced to the Walking Dead. I can't wait to see what contribution Siddiq may have to the stories. This is going to be... so... Rad!

In the past couple months, we've dug into his story a little bit more... where he came from, what his deal is... You'll just have to wait and see when/where/if that's revealed.

Also, we know how Negan is doing, but I'm concerned about Lucille. How's she doing? Is she still alive? We haven't heard anything about her yet (that I'm aware of).

Regards,
Ismail Gomaa

Lucille's whereabouts are currently unrevealed... but it won't be that way forever. We'll get around to it eventually.

What the fuck is up with the no "previously" section at the front of issue 142? C'mon, I rely on those because of my shit memory. I had to go all the way to my closet and take out last issue from my comic box to help me remember. It was strenuous. I'm still recovering. But anyway, pretty decent comic, I guess.

Adam D. Baldwin

Hamilton, ON

Since all of you were deprived of my hard work by some goblins at the printer... I'll print it here for the first time ever...

Previously: See THE WALKING DEAD #141.

Nice one, Sean.

You are the best, keep uploading!!!

Archie Cooper

This is some old school letters page trolling right here! We'll throw your ass in prison one day, Cooper!

We're not the ones doing the uploading! Unless you're doing the downloading legally! Archie Cooper... we're watching you!

Robert,

First of all, I'd just like to say that your book continues to blow me away with an amazingly intricate plot and art that leaves me staring at each page for 5 minutes (that's you Charlie!!!). I wrote to you a long time ago about trying the beef jerky with stroganoff. Sadly, I've only had it twice since then.

You made it more than once?!

Ok, now that that's over with, I have a few questions I hope you can answer. With our survivors now having access to a fishing vessel and exploring the seas, is it possible we'll see some of our group or a new group living on an island? Also, couldn't they ride up and down the coast looking for a vessel that's worthy to cross the ocean? They could try to find survivors in other countries and re-establish intercontinental trade.

Intercontinental trade sounds a bit more ambitious than their current fleet is probably capable of... but now would be a good time to mention the upcoming Telltale The Walking Dead three-episode miniseries, Michonne, starring... Michonne. That'll dig into some of the events that occurred between TWD #126 and TWD #139, which has her coming back from sea on Pete's boat.

Also, up until now, with the Whisperers, they've had a pretty good thing going with their current setup. There are so many people now, resources on a small island would be pretty strained. So it's not that practical.

Again, thanks for the books. They're excellent and I look forward to each and every issue. I've suggested the books to all of my friends who watch the show and haven't read them. Even gotten a few people hooked. Keep up the good work.

JD Shoe mate

You keep up the good work! Thanks for recommending the book to people!

To Robert and The Other People,

These are my first question so I would just like to say the comics are phenomenal. Okay so I have four questions.

1. Where in the freaking world can I find TWD Covers 2?!? Like is that even a real thing or is it a myth?? I found it on the internet but it is all "sold out" and some sites say they don't even carry it. It said it was released in July of 2013. Was it like a limited thing or like a comic con only type of deal?

Covers 2 never came out, and it's something we still talk about doing, but not yet. When it's finally on the schedule, we'll make sure everyone that wants one gets one. That has the money,

of course. Because it will be printed on non-uploadable paper stock, as well.

We really should put that back on the schedule. Sean... start pestering me about that. Charlie did his end... dig that up... make me do mine. We can make this happen!

Cutting Room Floor on the other hand...

2. Will you ever have The Walking Dead Weekly for issues 53-104?

We've talked about that recently... we do a lot of talking... and is that something folks want?

Walking Dead Weekly was selling very poorly by issue 52. That's why we ended up only doing it for one year. Also, at the time, doing it for another year would have had us very quickly reprinting issues that had been published very recently.

Had it sold better... I wanted to do it all the way up to the current issue, and then do a variant over the current issue with a TWD Weekly logo... that would have been funny.

3. Do you think Andrea and Rick are a better couple than Lori and Rick?

I'll be exploring this at some point eventually. Keep reading.

4. Are we gonna see more of the Kingdom? And maybe a special on the leaders (Douglas, Negan, Gregory, Ezekiel) like what happened before Rick was in their lives?

Thanks,
Eli Etten
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

We'll be seeing more of all the communities eventually, the Kingdom included. It's probably actually been developed the least. And there are so many big changes instore there after this issue and the death of Ezekiel.

Okay, Dante needs to fuck off. Nobody is going to replace Glenn - not on my watch. It may have been years since his death for Maggie with the time jump and all, but it's still a fresh wound for me, I'm not over it. Not to mention, those scenes on the show involving Glenn and baseball bats? FUCKED UP. Stay away from baseball bats, Glenn!

Jenna Southern
California

Dante's not such a bad guy... a bit of a horny bastard, but can you blame him? Is it your wish that Maggie never finds another shot at companionship? Because

here I was thinking her and Oscar were going to be a thing, and now that's just dust on the wind.

Give Dante a chance!

To Harry (Letter Hacks issue 142),

I'm sure writing that quip about the Australian aborigines felt like putting a figurative maraschino cherry atop your ice cream sunday of impressive farming knowledge. Unfortunately, rather than further elevate your intelligent and interesting analysis of our heroes' agricultural/economic quandary, this comment only serves to further an inaccurate and culturally-encapsulated stereotype of the oldest continuous culture on the planet.

To refer to the aborigines as "doomed to the primitive" assumes they would have chosen farming if only they could have. This ignores the fact of a 50,000+ year run thriving in a difficult environment, the vast majority of which is largely unsuited to any significant agricultural development. While agriculture has led to overcrowding and/or environmental devastation in many parts of the world, the Australian aborigines have lived in harmony with their land for eons. They have developed a rich heritage of visual and performing arts, elaborate spiritual traditions, an extensive taxonomy of regional flora and fauna, and have created effective medicines and medical procedures without the use of steel or plastic (Daniel Webster... pssssshhhh). Even now some may be found living reasonably comfortable lives with few or no modern amenities in parts of the Australian Outback no other group will ever likely populate.

These "doomed" primitives deserve respect.

Or maybe they always needed some tractors, a Walmart, and a McD's out there to get things rolling.

Otherwise, I loved your letter.

Mark

Greensboro, NC

P.S. Loving the development of this story arc. My sphincter contracted painfully even before I turned the page to see who was browsing the swords at the end of #142.

Friendly discourse on the accomplishments of the Aboriginal Australians... I'm with it.

Dear Mr. Kirkman et al, I get it. I know what you're doing. In fact, you may as well call this storyline the "it's not what you think" story. Every ending since issue 127 has ended with a clear expectation of what will happen next only to be followed with the opposite of that expectation.

I won't cite every example of course but the latest being the execution of Gregory by Maggie which came after Rick's "that's not who we are" speech, (thereby setting up a direct and serious conflict between the two in issue 141) but which was followed by Maggie's "never again" speech in 142 (which totally diffused said conflict). Well sir I for one approve. I've enjoyed every surprise. They've kept me on my toes and guessing. In fact, I find that you are once again working your magic with TWD. There is an underlying tension which pumps my blood full of adrenalin even in the quiet moments. There is political, social, psychological, emotional and physical danger lurking at every turn. I love it. The only problem is that now that I'm on to you I know not to expect any kind of war or conflict between Rick and Alpha, in spite of Rick charging off all hot headed to get Carl back. Especially now that Alpha has seen Rick's community. I mean she'd have to be a fool not to want to join in the seeming peace that Rick has created. Oh but wait,... Maybe that's what you're going to contradict. You devil you, you did it to me again, I have no idea where you're going.

I wasn't sure if you were really onto us, but it seems you're just punch drunk and dizzy. We'll keep you on your toes.

But I do know one thing. I love TWD. I just wish I didn't have to wait so long in between issues. Your effort to do the bi-weekly thing is deeply appreciated and helpful btw.

Frantz

Saddest news of the month... no more bi-weekly issues for a while. When I started at Skybound, one of the first things I approved at the printer was Compendium 2. Considering my previous experiences in comics, I did not think I'd still be here to see the printing of Compendium 3. Well, this issue fills out that collection (which goes to print next week), and that's only because this superhuman team of creators did four years of work in three years time. So not only did these bastards trick me into doing something I never thought I'd do, I'm looking forward to being here when it's time for Compendium 4. Onward to Compendium 4!

Music to my ears, Sean! Onward to Compendium 4!!

See you next month. I'm not going to lie... there's some heavy shit ahead.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Possibly a whole Compendium's worth!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

It was great to see so many of you at Comic Con. It seems like last issue really blew your minds. Now this issue serves as half epilogue on last issue's traumatic events, and half prologue on the very bad, no good shit to come.

Well said, Sean.

Oh my God! Please say that wasn't Ezekiel's blood on Alpha's machete. We learnt that he was on a romantic and maybe spontaneous quest to seek Michonne's supposedly unrequited love and may have learnt that she was going with Rick to find Carl. But please don't say he confronted Alpha on his journey and her journey back to her clan. He's not a confrontational character but if this eventuality transpires in future issues I'll cry. I think him and Michonne (and Jesus) are currently the 'kill and I will riot' characters so please confirm that my theories are incorrect!

Thanks to Robert Kirkman and everyone at Skybound,

Avid reader, Lucy

Sorry to say that yes, that probably was Ezekiel's blood on there, as well as some others. I don't know if we'll get clarification on who exactly killed who... or if Alpha killed all of them... but yeah, you nailed it. However, I don't think he was being confrontational, just the victim of circumstance.

Dear Captain Kirkman and crew,

I'm an aspiring comicbook artist (@tdkjace on instagram for plug's sake) so I wanna start by saying how good Charlie's art is in these books. I don't see enough people acknowledging him in these letter hacks so I thought I'd give him some love here. I mean, your writing is good and all Kirkman, but I think Charlie is the star of these books.

Okay... fine... I see how it is.

Anyways, here's a bunch of questions I've been collecting:

Are we going to see another time skip? I mean, with things becoming more civilized and all, I'd imagine timeskips are going to be needed to stop us from reading 10+ issues just about building more houses.

I don't think you'll be seeing much about building houses going forward. And was there really THAT much about building houses to begin with? I want to know more about that bread, though!

I think things will be plenty interesting for a long while without another time jump.

At the start of the time skip, Rick tells Magna that there's one lifer (Negan) and one guy in for a few weeks. So who's this other guy? What did he do? I demand answers.

The other guy was only in for something minor, I.E. not a lifer. We'll eventually find out who he was and see more about how punishment works in Alexandria. Stay tuned.

What's the relationship that the Savivors have with the rest of the communities? Do the rest of the communities look down on them? It doesn't seem like they exactly have their act together since it looks like their only export is timber and their leader wants to step down.

They're a valued part of the network of communities. We'll be seeing more of what's going on at the Sanctuary very soon.

Finally, how much of the books are hand drawn? The borders of the panels look hand drawn, but the black and grays look solid enough to be digital, so is there any switch off from handwritten to digital when Charlie sends the sketches off to the inker?

Charlie pencils everything on boards, and inks the panel borders to maintain the uneven, irregular style he's used since coming on the book. Then he scans all the pages and uploads them for Stefano. Stefano prints the pages out in blue line, then inks them on the boards. After that, he scans them, cleans up the files digitally, and sends them off to Cliff, who tones the pages digitally.

Anyways, thanks for making these books and reading my letter. My only request is that you never kill off Carl, he's easily the coolest character in the books (and I'll be waiting patiently for him to lose his eye in the show).

(ps, if something... unfortunate... ever happens to Charlie, let me know cause I promise I'll work for free)

Jace C

Orlando, Florida

Wait... the letter that started off by saying Charlie was the star of the book ends with you saying you could replace him if he dies?! Brass balls, man. Brass balls. "That quarterback is the lynchpin of the team... but if he gets injured... I'll step up!"

Hi Mr. Kirkman,

Here is an Italian TWD reader writing. I got almost all the Italian issues of the book but some weeks ago I incidentally stumbled upon some pages of the original version. I got hooked by the dialogues which believe me, lost half of the "meat" (no pun intended) in translation. Language generates consciousness and it is a vector of feelings. Sometimes feelings just do not pop up even if they are driven by a unique concept when this latter happens to be conveyed in a different language.

The book is about how people react in a post-apocalyptic scenario which ultimately brings to rebuilding civilisation. The path has been very clear: from the short community camping out of Atlanta

waiting for the National Guard to the 4-community trade network, the book marked all the intermediate steps you can expect (prison=self-defence – Woodbury=I want to get what you have) in an usual process of modernization.

When Rome was built, it initially was a small rural city essentially looking after its few inhabitants. After some skirmish with closer populations (read Albans for instance and the legend of Horatii and Curiatii), they started realizing that alliances are the key to survival (1st example: the Etruscans) and eventually Rome became the Roman Empire.

As well as oldest civilisation chose rivers as a starting point to building around, our "heroes" are choosing big cities which, like rivers, are not suitable for living in (well, at least no longer) but yet represent an invaluable source of resources.

That having been said, here is the question. Washington represented the very first "big attractor" having 4 major communities, which ended up to be allied after some "skirmishes", orbit around. Are you envisaging, as a potential future development of the storyline, that the Washington-orbiting communities will cross the path of, say, the Baltimore-orbiting communities (potentially organized in a similar way)?

Bottom line: is the TWD world becoming even larger and Rick going to meet his Etruscans?

All I'll say is that Eugene is fixing a radio.

To close, I am really missing a 100% genuine Italian character lasting as many issues as he/her needs to go patrolling for supplies, find a spaghetti-full closet in an abandoned house and prepare one of the best post-apocalyptic bolognese ever for the Hilltop get-together dinner. Then, you can have him/her eaten to death: I will not blame you of having a racist attitude when dealing with minorities!

Thanks for the book: keep the outstanding work up

Mauro

PS: yes the English is "a bit" crappy but... thanks for understanding

Your English is actually pretty great. Although, I can't believe you requested an Italian character that finds spaghetti... are you SURE you're not from the US?

Robert Kirkman,

I have no idea if I am doing this right haha. Anyways, I love your comics so much. I get treated like crap for being transgender and your comics are how I cope with being bullied. Your comics are my escape from reality and it keeps me going. I draw comics of me and Jesus killing zombies together. Man, I wish I was cool as him. Enough about me haha I have some questions about your amazing character Jesus (he's my favorite and he changed my life so thank you for creating him. I get that he's fictional but he means a lot to me. I can't imagine twd without him)

What's his back story? How'd he learn to be so dang awesome? I imagine he had military training and martial arts training as well. Did he have a boyfriend before the apocalypse? I like to imagine that he was married but obviously that would mean his husband got eaten by zombies and that sucks. Will you ever give Jesus a boyfriend? He deserves a total hunk that is bad ass like he is.

Jesus and Negan are by far the most requested backstories. We don't do flashbacks, but who knows what these

characters will reveal at the right time.

We'll eventually get around to revealing things about both characters. Sadly, there's just such a large cast there's only so many pages in an issue, so the rotation can get a bit tedious. I'm going to need to kill more characters, aren't I?

If you get this you're thinking "damn this kid is weird!" I love you Robert. Thanks for everything.

Claude from NJ

I don't, in any way, find wanting to know more about our characters weird. In fact... that's kind of the goal here. Y'know? I want people to always be clamoring for more. If you're not interested in finding out more about a character... I'm not servicing them properly. (Sorry, Gabriel.)

Sean and Robert,

I've loved the comic since day one, but let me get to the point.

First of all, what in the bloody hell is Alpha doing in there? Wait, stupid question, she's learning about their culture. Where will she go? Who will she talk to? And more importantly, WHAT will she do? Will she like what she see's and have her group and form a community? Or will she think they're pansies or whatever and keep moving? And what will she do with Carl? The suspense is already killing me!

Her being at the fair was mostly about assessing the level of threat the communities could serve. As for what she did? See last issue.

Second, they have boats, they have horses and carriages, so why the hell not have a small rail system? The first trains were basically horse carriages on rails, and they have plenty of wood and water for steam trains. Come on, Eugene has to have some plans for that. And before you ask where would they get the rails, the first rails were wood, so yeah. Just thinking.

That seems like a huge amount of work for limited return, especially considering the size of their communities right now.

The old railways are still there... for one. It's not like zombies destroyed them. There's probably even an old steam engine somewhere... so it'd be a repair job... not reinvention. But really... where would they GO? They have no reason to be traveling into the vast unknown around them... yet.

Third, after you're done with all the nomads (I mean, the big huge nomadic group), you need to have a small group of people roll in in a heavily customized (not like crazy post apocalyptic stereo type like) 18 wheeler, a few people bigger than Magna's group. And before you ask how would they power the truck, it would be an engine like in a deuce and a half, able to run on any flammable liquid, like methane made from animal poop (I mean, they did it in the third mad max movie, so why can't they?).

My question, and it's related to the railways, is how clear are any of the roadways? Are there people actively clearing them of cars, walkers, bodies and debris? I'd imagine it'd get very tiring stopping all the time to open up more road. Plus the sound of an 18 wheeler! You'd get everyone's attention pretty damn quickly, which isn't the best way to keep surviving.

Exactly.

Just some ideas for you to play with, so there (I would have mentioned planes, but it's not like they would have to travel that far, right?). Keep up the good work and at least respond to my letter if it doesn't end up in Letter Hacks.

Keep up the great work
Ian S. Olson

P.S. Why haven't I seen any dogs or cats? You'd think someone would have dog or a cat. Or a rabbit.

Folks gotta eat.

Hackers,

Seriously, FUCK Carl... "This world is my father?"
You ungrateful punk ass.

I guess because I'm a father I able to see his idiotic love for Ms. Damaged Goods for what it is... Or the fact that I can smell crazy from a miles away... But Rick should have let him go... This can't end anywhere but heartbreak. Carl is choosing an obviously insane girl over his own blood?? I knew something was wrong with that kid. Time to cut him loose, let Rick and the Gang go live in peace while Carl gets his Skin-Fitted for Fun Time in Crazy Land. If Carl wants to go down the rabbit hole for the first cute piece that comes along, let him do it alone.

Sure, you might be able to consider her "damaged goods"... but she's also a victim, and the Grimes family has never been one to stand by while injustices are being perpetrated.

Yeah, I'd argue it's a little more complicated than what you're saying, Matthew. Rick is mature enough to know that Carl couldn't actually MEAN what he's saying. He's a teenager... and he's trying to get a point across, that no matter how much you tried to protect me, shit happened and it shaped me... and he's saying this in the most over the top way, as teenagers often do. Also, there's an element here that maybe Carl is mature enough to be saying that terrible thing to get Rick to leave him there... so he can protect Lydia.

Speaking of Lydia... no matter how crazy you think she is... as Sean says, she's in danger... seemingly constant danger. Carl is a hero for risking his life to help her.

So while on the surface he may SEEM like an ungrateful punk-ass... there's supposed to be a lot more going on there.

I know the bloody knife isn't Andrea or Michonne, it's obviously someone from the Fair that tried to maybe stop Alpha on the road.. Nice misdirection there by the way. It was definitely a "oh shit I have to take a break before I turn THAT page" moment.

I've figured out the future of TWD for you. It's called "Oregon" - it's surrounded by mountains and rivers and streams, and we've only got a population of around 8-9 million (which SERIOUSLY cuts down on the amount of Roamers and Walkers out there, unless you count those bastard Zombies that keep moving up here from California).

What do you say, one last, LONG road trip for the promised land? It'd be like a Manifest Destiny/TWD crossover almost... You could run with it for years.

Anyway, fuck you guys very much for the next issue by the way... I just KNOW that it won't be Rick pushing Alpha off a roof and walking home in peace... If you bastards kill any of the REAL group because of Carl's Dick (and Kirkman's Bloodlust) I'm going to be ROYALLY pissed off.

Oh well, I guess Negan will have to step up.

- Matthew Toomb
Eugene, OR

I hope you weren't TOO pissed off. Also, I promise I'll never move from California to Oregon... I don't want to be one of THOSE guys.

Hellacious Walking Dead Team,

Where the fucking Fuck is Lucille!? She Better NOT have been destroyed. Especially for something lame like firewood! Hopefully, if Negan does ever reunite with her, I want him to raise that beautiful brain bashing bitch high in the sky like he just pulled merlins magic dick out of the fucking stone! On a lighter note, In 143, it brought a tear to my eye when Andrea referred to Carl as "Our Son". Who apparently doesn't give one whispering shit about that. But I'm not worried, my prediction is Rick and his hotheadedness starts another war. This time with a prison ending moving our characters on to yet another locale. Beginning to feel like destroy, build, destroy. I'm not mad though. I want to see how much damage this whispering horde can do. They ARE all whispers right and not zombies on the last page of 143?

Best Regards,
Dan from N.Y

No, those are mostly all walkers on the last page there (and first page of #144). There are Whisperers mixed in to help control the horde, probably mostly around the edges.

This "pattern" criticism does bug me at times. They lived in the prison... then they went to Alexandria... and there were stops along the way... but that was their journey. There was a clear progression to the locations they inhabited... and the stories told around those locations were completely different! And usually it's brought up in a predictive manner... like "Alexandria is going to get destroyed just like the prison, and then the story will be repetitive." Well... they haven't left Alexandria yet!

And if they ever do... it will be so we can tell completely different stories in a new and exciting location that provides big changes for the characters!

Soapbox rant... over. Thanks for reading everyone!

See you again next month. Where some punches are thrown.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, and those punches will be glorious!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Jeebus... is it time for readers' reactions to #144? It goes without saying that we received way more letters than normal... probably the most since #100. Most surprising thing? The outpouring of love for Rosita. Which I suppose shouldn't be all that surprising since she was first introduced almost 100 issues ago, and most folks in this book don't get that long.

You're surprised people love Rosita?! Rosita was awesome! She was... amazing and had... so much potential. I... well...

I think I've made a horrible mistake.

Well, too late now! Letters!

Dear Kirk & Co.,

What. The. Fuck. Just. Happened.

See, here I thought Alpha letting Lydia go with Rick to not be raped as often as Alpha clearly had been before she came to power showed that she had some humanity. That she wasn't quite as cruel as she was building up to be, but rather had to be hard and scary in order to protect herself and thought she was setting an example for her daughter. Then out of nowhere - BAM - we see she somehow managed to lead 12 characters away from the fair to behead them, including Ezekiel - who this never would have happened to without a damn tiger - and a pregnant Rosita!

You killed a pregnant woman! You killed Rosita! She was pregnant! And you killed her. Somehow THAT wasn't the full page head on a stake?! She was fucking pregnant, you killed her, and it was just the middle panel next to some guy with a braided goatee that screams 'I was really into System of a Down before the apocalypse happened'. Holy shit. You killed Rosita. And Ezekiel. And the guy that was probably going to start complaining that Magna was 'friend zoning' him because he just couldn't get it through his head that she wasn't that into him. And the beer guy. Two weeks ago some guy wrote a whole letter about how the brewer should have a more prominent position in the community, and then you went and killed the damn brewer. Heartless. You're a heartless killer, Kirkman.

There were two brewers! We only killed one of them!

So time to let Negan out of the cage, right? He's not the leader we want, but a 7 foot tall ping-pong loving psycho-killer has got to be a better match for these Whisperer fucks than an old cripple with a claw hand, right?

Whoa, we really have to wait a whole month now? Poor compendium readers.

Best,
Sean

Yeah, right? I'm hoping there's a lot of people that read Compendium 3 and then move right onto the single issues... fingers crossed. I just feel bad for anyone who will have to wait nearly four years for that follow-up.

Hey guys,

The 144 carnage has finally broken me down into writing in, and not even Glenn's untimely demise achieved that. After this atrocity we going to see some sort of evolution in Rick's ideas of leadership - I'm getting a Chamberlain/Churchill vibe that perhaps there are leaders suited to peacetime and others suited to conflict and Rick has to decide which he's going to be. I mean he's got a weapon of mass destruction with a penchant for melee combat (and endlessly creative swearer) living in his basement just waiting to be unleashed. I would say that Alpha wouldn't know what hit her, but I'm guessing Negan would spend at least a panel or two talking about using Lucille before doing so.

Keep up the relentless surpassing of expectations, Nick

Man, you guys really want Rick to let Negan go... don't you... hmmm

Man, fuck Negan. That walking turd's story is done and played out. I don't get why so many people want to see him have some bigger part in the story. What he needs is an embarrassing death, like tripping headfirst into the bucket in his cell and drowning. In any case, please let there be no alliance between him and Rick - at this point that would be on the level of "fan service", a bad and predictable trope to ruin a good story. I trust Kirkman to be a writer of greater cleverness and integrity than to allow his story to take such a hack turn.

Zedlor

Voice a contrary opinion, get printed! Right now a lot of folks are predicting that Alpha's massacre will lead to something with Negan... but only time will tell, won't it?

Only time will tell if I'm a hack or not! I'm on the edge of my seat!

Please draw me a picture of Ezekiel riding Shiva into the heavens. It will be the greatest piece of art, EVER.

Adam

That probably makes a better tattoo.

Well, I think it's time for you all to start requesting that from Charlie at conventions!

To Kirkman, Sean, and every other one of you who was responsible for this,

Bravo. You really had me there, I genuinely believe that Alpha was going to be docile and friendly with them from now on. But no, you had to go and do this. You killed Ken, the Goose to Marco's Maverick! Goose already died in the film, so why kill Ken as well? Also, I know this is asked every issue, but will we ever know who was going to be the father's baby? What with the whole thing of her being dead now, it seems like this will remain a mystery forever. In fact, was that why you killed her; so people would stop asking? Overall though, that issue rocked, a big well done to all of you who worked on it.

Ollie Whittall
United Kingdom

As a reader... I'd be pretty annoyed if I never revealed who the father was. That would be pretty terrible. So... y'know... stay tuned.

The Whisperer's storyline has been really intriguing so far! I was wondering, are Alpha's actions, as well as news of Gregory's execution, going to make Rick reconsider his "no killing" policy? Would anything make him change his mind to revert back to abiding by "you kill, you die" and if so, what?

Jenna Sutherland
California

We're sure going to test the boundaries, huh? Especially when you see the cover to #149... that one will get folks talking...

#144 was a fantastic issue but I kept wondering how Alpha managed to convince all those people to just wander off with her or most were probably surprise kidnappings, are we ever going to find out or will it be left ambiguous and were her choices completely random or did she knew who to kidnap and behead?

Stuart Steinberg,
Newcastle Upon Tyne

She would have used different tactics to get those people to a point where other Whisperers could overpower them and take them captive. She would have gone to Ezekiel and said she needed help with her lost child or anything to get him to follow her to a less populated place. And remember, the fair was set up outside of the fence and with so many people there... you wouldn't have to go too far out of the main area to find a fairly secluded place.

So there's no plan to go back and detail how it all went down. Alpha is very persuasive.

Dear Kirkman & Co.,

I can't believe you did it AND I can believe you did it! Of course, I'm talking about issue #144. So let me start off by saying that I am a high school English teacher who will do just about anything to inspire my kids to read and write. Walking Dead: Volume 1 is part of my repertoire thanks to my fantastic department chair. The Walking Dead is always a hit, because it covers so many themes, from survival, to race, to morality, and humanity. (And Volume 1 doesn't need censoring like some of the other volumes!) The Zombie genre in general does a great deal to propel discussions about race and culture in America.

I teach at a school that is 95% Latino. I work hard at being a good role model for them and providing examples for them to strive toward. For some kids, having someone of the same culture to identify with can be significant. So let me get to Rosita. Besides the Governor's henchman Martinez, she's the only Hispanic I've seen in the series. (I was holding out hope that Jesus was pronounced "Hey Zeus" because that would be a very positive role model for my kids!) We've discussed how your book is all-inclusive, with positive and negative examples of all people, and we've never found you slacking by giving us stereotypical characters. In fact, all of the characters are written so well, it doesn't matter what race they are because the good ones could all make great role models (who wouldn't want to be like Michonne?). I think it's easy for any reader to identify with Rick, and that's a testament to your writing. So, aside from being eye candy and having huge hoop earrings—our class discussions were negative regarding Rosita's role. Some of my kids reasoned that in a survival situation a beautiful, smart girl might "hunker" down with the strongest male she could find—AKA Abraham—which opened up a hailstorm of a discussion. Sadly, when the kids compared her character to Maggie and Andrea, it left her character lacking in depth and development.

AND NOW SHE'S DEAD! No chance at redemption; no chance to get to know her motivations or her origin (it would've been nice). I can only hope that the television series will shed some light on her. So what gives with her character? Any chance we'll see a strong Hispanic character or any chance you could change Jesus' name and his last name could be Mendoza? (Just kidding on that latter request.)

All that said, even the little bit you provided on Rosita is going to make for some more great discussions this coming school year. At the end of the day, she isn't just a Latina, she's human. And I think your series does a good job of making every character relatable. I'm not happy about her portrayal or demise, but I'll never be one of those "You killed them and I'm not reading your series anymore" kind of people.

I'm going to have the kids write a backstory for Rosita this year. We'll see how it goes. Keep it up the good work Kirkman! It's never a surprise that I'm always surprised when reading your book.

Marc Mendoza
San Antonio, TX

Dante is Latino! There is also Eduardo who mans the wall at the Hilltop, he was seen with Kal a lot. Also, Marco is Latino. So... there ARE other Latino characters. I'll miss Rosita as much as you guys will and I hate to agree with you, but yeah... I could have fleshed her out a little bit more. I think there has been a great deal of story involving her and there was a lot going on with her recently... but she's one of many characters that I've always felt I could do more with.

What's Gabriel been up to recently? For instance.

I will take a moment to defend Rosita in comparison to Maggie or Andrea. I think I've covered this in the letters column before, but I don't think her story, of her using her attractiveness to survive is anything but realistic. There are men and women who use their appearance to get ahead in a lot of areas of life. It might not be the most favorable portrayal of a female character in the book... but above all else, I try to be realistic in my treatment of all characters from all backgrounds.

I want all my characters to be well rounded and interesting... but this book will always have smart characters and dumb characters and weak characters and strong characters of all shapes sizes and colors.

But yes, as far as ethnicities go... this book needs more Latinos. We'll be working on that moving forward.

Hi Kirkman and Friends! (New Episodes @ 7)

I just finished reading 144 and Ho-lee wow. If you told me that twelve important characters died in one issue of The Walking Dead before July 8, 2015, I would have double checked my calendar to make sure it wasn't April 1, 2015.

I gotta say, Alpha's a bit nuts. I get the sense that she wants a sort of Cold War between the Whisperers and Rick and Friends (New Season this Fall), but killing that many of his buddies is not the way to make him not want to kill you.

I like the Cold War theory... except I really don't think she views Rick and Friends as a major threat at all. More that she thinks this one act would demoralize them completely and make them docile. Except she really doesn't know who she's fucking with, right?

Here's hoping Rick will realize what an opportunity he has with the knowledge of Alpha's horde. I've been talking with my brother and Dad, who read it, and we've thought of a couple of ways for Rick to get rid of that mob, and in effect their leverage. For example, they could burn them all to cinders in the night, or maybe devise other countermeasures at home.

We've already seen how effective they are at corralling walkers, but a group that size? Who knows?

Stay tuned!

Thanks for taking the time to read this! Hope to see you at Comic-Con!

-Michael Patton, longtime reader

New York Comic-Con? See you there!

Loving the new sky bound exclusive michonne figure. I was wondering if there are any plans to make comic figures like Tyreese, Morgan, Lori, Heath, or someone like that. Maybe some older characters that have a large following/fan base? That would be sick. Not sure if this will be printed but i just wanted to throw out suggestions. Thanks, man.

James Ruth
Memphis, Tn

Thanks! For those of you that don't know, Skybound releases exclusive action figures around four times a year, and made available in our online store. We have two more coming out this year, one debuting at NYCC, one on Black Friday. They're more recent characters than the those you named, but no less popular. Or hated.

Hey Guys

Craziness is about to ensue with the border. I can't wait to see two nations fight, but more to see what advantage Rick's clan will come up with to neutralize the walkers that the Whisperers will use. And one thing that I REALLY hope you do would have the Whisperers kill a member of our group, allow them to zombify, and then skin them to wear to mess with everyone's head. Please make that happen.

Sure. I mean, where are all those bodies that used to be attached to those heads?

1 question. Were the heads on the sticks still biting? By that I mean did the stick damage the brain when they skewered it so that the heads wouldn't zombify? I can't see how the brains wouldn't be damaged, but the panel with Ezekiel looked a lot like he was looking and biting at Rick. I think that would send so much more of a message too. Alpha telling them that those heads are basically on their side now.

Keep up the good work.

Johnny

The sticks didn't pierce all the way up into the brain... so yeah, those heads were fully zombified.

Hi guys,
I just finish reading 144 and I just need you to say thanks for not killing Father Gabriel. Actually now thinking about it I have not seen him in a long time, where is he?

A lot of people complain about Michonne and all the stuff, but I don't see anyone asking for Gabriel, come on people Gabriel is awesome. Shame on folks who doesn't care about him.

Actually, this might be our most popular question. I'm going to keep running it until we

see Gabriel speak again. I'm not even that big a fan, but he's always had a unique perspective when the community's hurting.

Also thanks for not killing Earl Sutton, he is the boss

Agreed.

From Costa Rica,
Marco

We'll be seeing a lot more from Earl Sutton!

And Gabriel... eventually... I guess.

Hey TWD Team!

Kirkman, Adlard, Gaudiano, Rathburn. That was the goddamn creepiest feeling I've ever felt reading an issue. Reading it was actually an experience. Going into it thinking there would be A death had me worried. But as I was flipping panel... by panel... by panel... the heads just kept coming! I was convinced they wouldn't stop! You guys are the most sick, despicable, vile, dastardly people whose work I've ever had the pleasure of reading. And for that, I thank you.

On from the ushy-gushy stuff! My question! So, with the Whisperers initial reveal I was under the impression they were wearing human flesh. But now that it is established they wear roamer skin, how do they pull that off without any sort of infection? In AoW we saw the power of zombie gunk, so wouldn't a small cut on a Whisperer be a death sentence?

In issue 140 we see the Whisperers camp and in the distance we can see the tanning of some sort of hides. Are these roamer skins and that's how they remove infectious gunk on the skin or something else entirely?

First time writer from ON!

- Kyle

Just to get this on the record once and for all... and it is complicated, I know... here's how zombification works. Whatever makes people come back as zombies after they die--it's inside them. It's inside everyone. No matter how anybody dies, as long as the brain is intact... they turn into a zombie.

So what the fuck does a bite do?

Well... bites, and direct to blood contact with zombie gunk, like the Saviors attacked with, causes death. It's a strong infection that leads to fever that kills someone. Then the "virus" or whatever is already in them... turns them into a zombie.

So the Whisperers... clean the skin of the dead, zombie or otherwise. It's essentially human leather at that point. They were seen stretching it out and drying it in recent issues. The skin is processed. It masks their smell, and makes them smell a little dead, which allows them to move among the dead, but the inside of it... very clean and safe. I hope that clears things up.

While you wait for the next issue, don't forget to check out Fear the Walking Dead on AMC! You probably already are, but just want to make sure you're all aware of the new Walking Dead TV spinoff... and by the time #147 hits stores, TWD Season 6 will have premiered as well! Jeez, is there any better time to be a Walking Dead fan? If we do any more shows, I'm not going to have room for letters!

-Sean Mackiewicz

More shows?! Sounds like a good idea!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome to Walking Dead month! If President Obama hasn't already made that official, maybe it's still in the cards for next year. Not only do you get this issue, but Fear the Walking Dead just finished its first season, Season 6 (!!!!) of The Walking Dead just premiered last weekend, with a big kickoff at NYCC... TWD Compendium 3 just hit stores... TWD: The Road to Survival is now available on mobile devices, its first content update with new missions newly available ... I don't shill all that much, so thanks for indulging me. I just want to make sure you folks are all aware of EVERYTHING... because you are our core audience, the ones who have supported this book for so long and gotten us within spitting distance of #150... an over-sized 30 page issue...but will Andrea still be around to see us there?

Ouch, Sean! Touchy subject! We'll see where things land after that issue. It's going to be pretty crazy.

I just wanted to let you know I just love this book but I have a couple of issues I wanted to express the first was Maggie killing Gregory I really felt that was unnecessary because you have demonstrated that Gregory has the survival skills of an invalid and if you have ever watched the movie Mad Max beyond Thunderdome ...there was a punishment called "Gulag" all they had to do was blindfold Gregory ride him away from the settlement for 50-100 miles ...and then him goodluck he is on his ownand unless Gregory can talk his way out of being dinner for a zombie ...he is pretty much dead and as for the 2nd issue Rick is absolutely correct he has seen the size of Alpha's horde and he realizes that immediate retaliation would be a disaster but please let it be Eugene that comes up with a plan that would lead to the demise of Alpha and her group now I will shut up and wait for my next monthly dose of the dead!
Pete W, Illinois

The old "I'm not going to kill you, but I ain't gonna keep you from dying" trick... Gregory's repeated betrayals just needed swift justice. This wasn't a time for politics, it was emotional and needed to put any threat he posed down for good. Because fuck that guy.

Also, Gregory was getting a foothold in turning the people of The Hilltop against Maggie. She publicly executed him to show her strength, and that betrayal would not be tolerated. It was very much a political move.

Hello there Mr.Kirkman and crew! Huge huge fan (probably gonna fangirl it if this gets into letter hacks).

Fangirl it up!

I just want you all to know that I love you all and have been so happy to be a part of TWD journey.

Okay.. lets get down to business.

WTF happened to Rick Grimes? Did he grow a vagina in the two year time skip after all out war? Where did his balls go though? Seriously. As much as I love Alpha, she has to go. Rick needs to take her out or everything he has been working so hard for has gone to shit. We need the Rick that agreed to kill Negan, not the Rick that locked Negan in jail. Time to pass the torch to someone that has a set of balls... Maggie maybe? Or Michonne? Someone that sees the problem for what it is, we need somebody like Negan to take charge that'll find a permanent solution for this whispers nonsense.

Anyway, if Rick ends up manning up anytime soon then that's cool too! But by the looks of issue 146's cover all he can do is hit Maggie. (looks like she got blood on her lips, although I have been wrong before.)

Thanks for reading this letter and an even bigger thanks if you post it for all to see! I love you guys!

Josh Smith , N.B

Your doubt echoes the sentiments of a lot of concerned citizens of Alexandria right now, and a huge thrust of this story is how Rick responds.

Yep. So... stay tuned!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Poor Michonne... But especially poor Eugene... This new arc is definitely more suspenseful. I'm looking forward to seeing how the "A New Beginning" Rick will handle this situation... On a side note we know that the Saviors are at the fair (or at least a majority of them). How come Dwight hasn't been seen? He's in good relations with Rick. Last time we saw him was in 141. Is he even at the fair? He's the best crossbow wielding character in TWD history. The best... I hope he and Negan end up having a little reunion.

Keep up the great writing and drawing TDW crew!
~Bryant P.

Dwight wasn't at the fair, but keep reading...we'll be seeing the Saviors again sooner than later. (I mean, come on, we're not going to just show Dwight in #141 and leave you folks hanging for another couple years, would we? I wish we were that mean...)

We are sometimes that mean. How many issues did we go without seeing Michonne? Hey! Speaking of which, did you hear the big news? Telltale's next TWD game is going to focus on Michonne DURING that time gap! It's going to be awesome. See how she got on that boat! In a video game!

Dear Kirkman and Gang,

I just read Issue #145 and although not a lot really happened (I'm sure many people were hoping a major throw down would occur after Issue #144), I really enjoyed it. We left #144 with a tragic event with several favorite characters checking out. But, with #145, despite the obvious heartbreak expressed by the characters, the majority of the scenes were actually pretty peaceful...at least to me.

Rick and the gang were in an open field, full daylight with a light breeze. In live action form, I imagine the scene fairly silent and sort of tranquil, aside from the faint sound of the leaves and grass blowing in the wind intermixed with the 'gaks' and 'oahhs' of the zombie heads.

I'm no literary guru but I believe the word is juxtaposition. Whatever it is, great job. Maybe I'm weird for appreciating the calmness of the setting mixed with the tragedy of the Rick and his peeps, but for a story filled with violence and gore, it's great when things sort of suddenly slow down. As Rick says in one of my favorite lines of the series - when Carl comments on how boring the sunset is, Rick responds, "Isn't it great".

Thanks for an amazing story! Never stop.

Sincerely,

Joe, Detroit, MI

A genuinely nice letter! We still get those.

And they're NEVER fun to respond to. See? THANKS! Where's the fun in that?

I've been a big fan of the comics for quite some time and have been really enjoying the Alpha storyline.

But by far my favorite character is Michonne. She is a force and such a great, strong woman to look up to. After reading the past few issues I have to wonder: will Michonne ever find happiness? I know it's the zombie apocalypse and all but it seems she never gets even a bit of peace and love like some of the other characters do. Michonne not only needs a loving relationship, she deserves one that will last.

Please make it happen Kirkman!

Katie

Happiness is a journey, not a destination. I think her friendship with Rick definitely brings her closer, or at least has her pointed the right way. No shortage of love for Michonne here.

She has an interesting journey ahead of her. That's for sure! Will it involve happiness? Probably... how much remains to be seen.

Hello,

Hey guys great job keeping this book going and keeping it so fresh! I am loving the development! Issue 144 was gut wrenching!

I wanted to ask if you ever thought about doing an issue where we wouldn't see any of the good guys at all and just do an issue where the plot was unfolding showing the bad guys discussing things or the conflicts with their groups. Just a thought.

Thanks and can't wait to see what other crazy stuff you come up with!

Best regards
Chris in Belgium!

There was at least one issue back in the Governor days where the guys did that. We've certainly seen a lot of focus on the Whisperers encampment already... but time will tell.

Keep reading!

Hey! Hi Robert, Charlie, and their brilliant team! I beg your pardon for my English is not the best. I come from Russia, and we have here, as you know, the bears need to walk, to make playing the balalaika and drink vodka in the morning, so the time to learn English, I could not find it. But not in this case! I've got some questions for you:

1) The release of 137 Carl lost his virginity. And after sex Lydia said, "Oh, it was so cool!". Are you seriously? It was his first sexual intercourse! It was to last less than a minute! Yes, and given the fact that he had never masturbated (or rarely). Do not you know the physiology of the male body? How was your first time? Also perfectly ?!

The subject of Carl's masturbation habits has never been discussed in this comic. Nor will it ever again.

I would argue Lydia was not referring to duration or quality... but the feeling of it all. She's used to much different sexual experiences. To put it mildly.

2) And, indeed, there is generally the situation with "it"? People do not have sex, not to masturbate, women monthly. Yes, they're all at each other on a daily basis must throw with unfounded claims. Hatred, hatred, aggression and should come from them.

There's plenty of banging off panel. Killing on, banging off. Though sometimes there's sex on panel, and we kill folks like Ezekiel off.

Frankly, I'm disgusted with myself for running a letter about pre-teen masturbatory habits... knowing that Robert IS NOT going to join me in any of this. Let's just get this over with. I have to run to the hardware store before it closes.

Let's just assume everyone is masturbating exactly as much as they should be and move on.

3) Relationship with another guy Aaron's okay. I'm not a homophobe and tolerant attitude to such people but ... Jesus !!! Yes, you're there all gone mad! The fact that you are an atheist does not mean that you can so shamelessly "joke" on the theme of orientation Christ! You insult the feelings of all believers (at least in our country), and we have it punished criminally responsibility! Make it at least bisexual for compromise.

...fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck...

Again... it's a nickname. I'm not saying Jesus was gay by having a character nicknamed Jesus who happens to be gay. This letter is amazing, Sean. Nice work. I'm always going to refer to Aaron as "Relationship with another guy Aaron". That's his full name now!

4) At the end of almost every issue I have goosebumps, consciousness completely flips 720 degrees, downcast. And after the 144 release my eyes out of their sockets. And the pressure has risen! Who will pay me ophthalmologist ??? And I pray to your comics. He wildly cool!

So you're polytheistic? I wish we spoke the same language. Maybe nothing you write means what you think it means and it's all a deep meditation on community and acceptance in a... fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck...

I wonder how he'd feel if we introduced a gay character named "comics" now?

Thanks to him I got hooked on "Outcast" which, unfortunately, in our country are reluctant to translate. At the moment, only transferred 1-8 issue and what is the author's translation. By the way, could you somehow assist in the translation of the comic book "Outcast" in our country? Thank you for all! Love you!
Vlas Kuznetsov, Russia, Syktyvkar.

We're working on getting Outcast translated in every country possible. We want you, Vlas, especially to read Outcast so you continue to question the true meaning of life through Robert's comics.

I feel like I failed you, and I don't even know you.

You fail everyone, Sean.

Ok, see you next month.... Where I'll probably be booted from letter hacking duty, or at least suspended for a couple months to reflect on producing the worst letter hack to date.

Meanwhile, check out the preview—created for TWD fans—for Image's newest comic RINGSIDE. While Robert and I can't agree on the merits of wrestling, we can agree that this comic set in the world of wrestling is pretty goddamn STELLAR. Everybody's Favorite Joe Keatinge, Nick Barber, Simon Gough and Ariana Maher are going to show everyone the business in November. Enjoy.

-Sean Mackiewicz

I love RINGSIDE as much as I hate wrestling! See you all back here very soon!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Oh man... you've gone and done it this time. NEGAN!!!!!!!

Holy crap. I have to admit... I'm currently writing issue 152, which is the March issue... which is officially as far ahead on writing scripts as I've ever been in this series. So this is going to be an interesting letters column. Sean, I'm counting on you to read this crap closely and make sure I don't spoil upcoming issues in my responses.

I mean... more than I usually do.

Hello! I just have couple questions, and a month or two (or three or four or five or six....) is too long for me to wait. I'm impatient.

Letter Hacks isn't the best resource for impatient people. Even if it goes well, you have to wait two months for a response. But there's probably people who wrote in to #1 and are STILL waiting. Do you still have any old letters? Be funny to run one after all this time.

Now you have me wishing I could go back and read all the letters that came in for issue 1 when it came out. Sadly... that was many computers ago, and Grandpa Kirkman isn't so good at backing up the ol' email... Oh well. Who has time for nostalgia.

Also... I think we printed a large percentage of the mail that came in back then. So yeah...

Q1/request 1 - Please make Rick less crazy. He's cool. I mean, crazy Rick IS cool, but I feel like you're building up to him dying or something really shitty happening to him. Don't do that, please. Make him cool again. Cool Rick is cooler than not-quite-as-cool Rick. Also, is there any small chance, at all, that his leg will get better? Well, I don't mean get better, but could Earl not make him something cool to make him able to walk without the cane? I don't know how that shit works though. Probably not possible, right? But still, that would be cool.

How many hours are in a day when you don't spend half of them trying to be cool? When is the last time any of us REALLY were cool? How long has it been since any of us really NEEDED to be COOL? In a world ruled by the dead, we are forced to finally stop being cool... and start getting real.

I see what you did there.

Q2 - Someone in the Whisperers has to have some sense of morality, right? I mean, they just killed a woman who was carrying a baby. When they skin her and they see that (I don't know if they WOULD see that, I don't know how that shit works either) would some people not think 'Wow. Alpha's mean. She shouldn't be in charge anymore!' then start some kind of uprising?

Science fact: Fetuses grow in the uterus. Rosita was probably in her first trimester, not really showing... Whisperers probably never noticed.

Lydia also said that the other, less crazy (presumably), people they've encountered have been killed or have joined them (forcibly?) so someone who has been forced to join them must realize how fucked up that is. An uprising would be freaking cool, especially with Alpha cracking and shit.

As seen this issue, it's going to take some strong opposition to challenge Alpha's leadership spot.

Q3 - Andrea...

Is she gonna die in issue 150? I mean, obviously I don't expect you to answer, but like drop some hints or something. Please? Something has to make Rick go after the Whisperers, and killing Andrea seems like the only thing that would make him go crazy (more than he already has, at least). Please don't kill Andrea. She's also cool. She also seems to be the only main character just now who is relatively in control.

Yes, Andrea does die in issue 150. Sorry.

Q4 - Also, what is with all the crazy? I mean, everyone is in a more safe position than they've ever been before. Take Rick for example. Before the whisperers showed up, he was practically retired (in the most apocalyptic way possible). He went to meetings and shit and made sure everything was running smoothly, but apart from that. He wasn't in danger, he had food and water and shelter and all that good stuff. So why was he more susceptible to angry outbursts then than he was at like issue 49-66, when he had practically none of those things? It's like being safe makes people angry.

Anyway, keep up the good work. Toodles!

-Dan

There is a very good reason Rick has such a short fuse. And it is BECAUSE he's in such a safe secure place. He has more to lose. Which is why he's going so careful with Alpha and the Whisperers.

Hey everyone! Just read the issue 146 and I'm really disappointed. Yeah, disappointed. Because I've been waiting for a MONTH and 7 pages without any words really suck (no offence Charlie, graphics is always cool).

When season 5 of the AMC show ended I was really excited to discover a new word of comics for me (I've never read one) - I was surprised - the story in this comics was way better than the story in AMC show. But unfortunately I've began to notice that the story is getting dull. Really, since the last compendium ended the action was pretty lame. Rick became old and evil I don't really like new Rick and I can't really tell why. Negan is just sitting in a cage without swearing, I really believe he can get better, but why Rick wouldn't give him a try? I mean Negan and Rick are really alike, together they can be a mighty duet. Don't you think?

Well I guess I was just hoping to see more movement, where heroes do something. But now there are so

many heroes so things move very slowly (there is the only way to fix this - a massacre, a big, huge, giant, bloody massacre which will tear all of the communities apart, yeah that would be awesome). We all know by now that there will be a conflict, good ones will win and the bad ones will die. But what makes this book special - the spectatority (this word exists, right?). Please, give us some incredible stuff that will last long enough to keep us begging for more, not this boring routine life!

You think Rick is evil... and yet you're advocating a MASSACRE and the END of communities... ok, pal.

Here's hoping the nasty stuff awaits us in the next issue! Keep up the great work and please, make biweekly issues again, waiting for a whole month is killing me!

Sorry you don't think the book is as exciting as it could be. I feel like there's been a lot happening... and there's plenty more to come.

As for bi-weekly... not any time soon. We are ahead schedule-wise, but we don't want poor Charlie to break. So for now, you'll just have to live with our on time, every time, rock-solid monthly schedule... which is far better than most comics' schedules. So quit complaining!

P.S. I wonder how zombies behave in Russia? I bet our people killed all the zombies long ago... with icicles! And one little request (even if this will not be published) - can you, please, transcribe Negan? it is very important - because in Russian we have different variants of pronunciation and it really important for me as a linguist. Thank you anyways!

Vladimir from Russia!

You don't want me translating anything in any other language. I would be no good at that. I'll let the professionals handle that.

To Kirkman,

Just read 146 and I can't believe Rick and Maggie had a slugfest. I really can't believe Maggie whooped his ass. And what was up with those evil eyes Eugene had at the end. I would not want to be the Whisperers right now. I feel for Eugene. Can't wait to see what he has planned.

Ryan
Knoxville, TN

Maggie's tough, and Rick has a bum leg and a claw hand. He's no longer the guy who went knuckle up with Tyreese. As for Eugene... keep reading.

Dear Robert & Sean,

I just keep loving TWD more and more at every new issue. I'll go straight to the point : Eugene's radio. Seems like in #146, he's taking pieces off it. Sure, the guy's having a tough time, but I hope he'll get back to it. I was wondering what would happen if the only person able to figure out how to fix it actually... succeeded?

Yeah, the Alpha issue, I know. That bald psycho's gonna keep them busy for a while... But still... Y'know ? Damn, I'm sure you know.

Ludovic Iadanza from fucking France

Just... keep... reading...

Hello Robert,

Just when I thought you were going to execute an awesome, Larry Hama-esque silent issue, you had to go and ruin it with words.

Really, the only excuse for dialogue would have been the return of Negan. Because Negan is never silent.

Joe Kazmer
Pittsburgh, PA

Negan was silent in this issue! Next issue... not so much.

Dear Kirkman and Crew,

I've been reading TWD for about two years, from the moment that I read the first issue I was hooked. I immediately wanted to go to the store and buy the rest of the series that had been published up to that point. Once I'd caught up by reading the first 19 volumes, I eagerly awaited each issue in the "All Out War" arc. After the finale of that arc, I couldn't wait to see what happened next. At first, I thought that the sudden time skip was clever and I had high hopes that this new phase in the story would be well written and exciting to follow. When the Whisperers came along my friend and I were discussing the sudden change in the series, talking about how interesting this new development was and how it would be great to see all the terrific things you would do as the story progressed. Unfortunately, I was incredibly disappointed. In this past year, any hopes that I've had for this "new phase" to become something fun and worth reading, but all that I've seen is the constant downward spiral of this series. The characters that I once loved (Rick and Michonne especially), have become hollow shells of their former selves. In the past, Rick Grimes would've been gathering his people, weapons in hand, preparing for battle at the slightest threat from an outside group. But now, he's just a pathetic old man who's no better than Gregory was when he used to run the Hilltop. Michonne is a warrior, and without her sword she's just a watered down version of her true self. Finally, the writing of the story itself; when I began reading TWD, I was drawn in by the innovative writing and time and again I was thrown a curve by the various twists that always kept me on the edge of my seat wanting more. But now, the writing is flat. The "twists" have become mundane courses of action that are easily foreseen. I am no longer on the edge of my seat wanting more of what I've read, but instead laid back wishing that there was more depth and excitement from every issue. To be frank, the story's gone stale. Where I was once overjoyed to see the new issues at my local comic shop, I now feel myself wondering if I should buy the newest issue every month. Instead of passionately reading each issue and savoring every page, I find myself speeding through issues that often have many pages with a severe lack of dialogue and an abundance of seemingly useless and bland illustrations. It is with a heavy heart that I must admit that this series is in no way as good as what it once was; and it's a damn shame that you've simply been shitting in comic books and slapping the title of "The Walking Dead" on the cover.

Riley Ali
Los Angeles, Ca

We welcome criticism. This is absolutely the forum for that (warning, Robert, more criticism coming later on)... but "shitting in comic books"? I would not have gotten into editing if it in any way involved feces. I don't care how much you guys like Robert and Charlie, I am in NO WAY handling/applying/smearing their shit. I don't want to cast stones, but... maybe

your retailer is doing the shitting?

We try our hardest every month. We thank you for your support. About two years of anything is a good time.

To each his own. My only rebuttal would be to point out that you seem to want Rick and Michonne to behave the same way for this entire series. That's just not what this comic is meant to be. If Rick were still acting the same way he always had... THAT, to me... would mean the book is stale. I'm sorry you don't like the direction we've gone in. I'd respond in more detail, but I'm really anxious to get to the other criticism that Sean said is coming...

are you ever going to touch on the situation with the carsons and how they got separated because that has always confused me

Eli

Negan liked the younger Carson and made him come back with him to act as his assistant. It'll be explained in more detail at some point.

Hey, everyone. I agree that you need to make a map. Not like a map of the Island on LOST (each one seemed to have the location of Hurley's golf course, for some reason). I do like maps. I like hearing that Siddiq came from Miami. Way back when, I was disappointed when we got very little information about what went on with Abraham's group between Houston and Atlanta. But that didn't matter, it could all have been off-panel anecdotes shared between different members of the group.

But with the Whisperers and Pirate Michonne, there should be a map. You think? Magda's group came from Richmond and Jesus's group was moving a herd south, right at them. For no good reason, I always saw the Hilltop and The Sanctuary as a sort of triangle, with the Kingdom closer to Alexandria, but perhaps due north. I've never been able to pin down any place like the Hilltop's Benneton House, but Nicholas and Darryl (on the show) mention they had gone 50 miles out, my guess would have to be west, or they would have encountered (yeah, yeah, Jesus is stealthy) someone from the Hilltop. Or even from Negan's group.

So I would think the Hilltop might be at the tip of Maryland. The Sanctuary could be farther north> I can see why you guys don't want to try a map, it really is hard, considering how much open space there is now. What are the boundaries, do you think? Everything within 100 miles from Alexandria? The Whisperers should then be to the SW of the Hilltop, perhaps traveling northward all along (since it was implied that Morgan heard them on the TV show). So why the boundary? Was it because of the herding or the thought of there being more and more "people" activity? I think Alpha made that line herself, it didn't exist before Lydia split to be with Carl.

Yeah, it's a bit of a rabbit hole... especially when you start mixing and matching facts from the comic and TV show. We have a running fact sheet to keep us honest in the comic, so if any info is revealed about a character or location, we lock it in. But I like the way you're thinking.

Where are the herds being herded? There must be some sort of rudimentary map. I thought perhaps they were being herded into the Atlantic or at least point in the right direction. I hope you'll print this letter, if only to either say that YES it is hard to draw up a map or to allow other readers to perhaps add suggestions.

I'll get on this map thing ASAP.

OK. Now I have to go write to SEX CRIMINALS, because they want "porn in the woods" stories.

All the best,

Wayne in Chicago

Where I'm from we call it "ditch porn." Maybe I owe those brimpers a letter myself...

I have been reading since issue 1 and have never had any complaints on the storyline but the fact that there will be no explanation as to how alpha lured all those people off to be beheaded is bullshit. They deserve an explanation better than alpha is persuasive. Pure laziness on your part to not do better than that. What's next rick disappears or negan escapes and we are left to guess what happened ?

Darryl Schenstead
Langley BC Canada

Bah! This complaint I couldn't disagree with more. HOW she led them away is not important. The reveal that it was done was way more important. How she did this, again, is easily assumed. She seduced Louie, which is implied in the story. She could have asked Ezekiel to help her find her lost child, or dog, or anything. If you're asking how she overpowered them... well, she clearly wasn't alone the whole time. I think showing how each person was led away would be a waste of space. That's why I chose to tell the story the way I did.

Hi first time writer big fan.

First of all I can't believe Eugene is suggesting using Lydia. If he doesn't know how close Carl and Lydia are he should be informed to spare him of Carl's anger. Threatening Carl's girlfriend would almost be as dangerous as going against the whisperer's zombie horde alone with a machete. Also if they go to war against the whisperers, Rick won't be as useful as he was against the saviors. He can hardly fight when he is using his one hand to hold a cane. So he is going to need someone to lead his troops. NEGAN PERHAPS??

-Brian

Perhaps!

Double perhaps!

See you next month when Rick and Negan talk. There's some talking, I guarantee you that. And the unexpected return of... well, once we finish shitting directly into the comic books, you'll see! No wonder that machine broke at the printer this week...

-Sean Mackiewicz

If you need me I'll be stocking up on fiber rich foods. Only the best for The Walking Dead readers!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

You've been asking where Lucille's been, and now you know! And now that Dwight's dusting her off... will he be cracking heads in the future?

And for you fans of the AMC TV show, we now know who'll be holding Lucille on the show... Jeffrey Dean Morgan has been cast as Negan. That's some spot-on casting, and I can't wait to see how he does in the near future. Steven Yeun's already escaped death once this year, can he do it AGAIN?! He already threatened to kill you once in a letters page. You TV guys are way fucking cruel to that guy and his fans!

Heh... yeah... I'm willing to maybe admit that's a little true... so, uh... onto the letters!

Dear Kirkman and Walking Dead team,
Was I the only one who screamed like a teen girl at a Justin Bieber concert when Michonne entered Rick's house in her trademark hood? I was so excited to see her like that. My question is, is she back to old Michonne? Please say yes! Damien Raynor Jamestown, NY

I didn't even make that connection at the time, but classic hooded Michonne was in effect. No telling what the future holds, though.

Stay tuned!

Greeting to Robert, Charlie, Sean and the Walking Dead crew!

So, a couple of things. First and foremost, I was really content with 147's ending. It felt like, and I mean this as a constructive fan, there was a pacing issue of sorts after 144. I mean yeah, I get that people just lost their families and their friends, and I like that that's getting the light it deserves, but for a monthly series I have to admit that it felt like it went pretty slow (despite 146, the first 8 pages gave me goosebumps and the issue as a whole was powerful to say the least). However, the end to 147 definitely packed a punch that I feel will have a lasting affect.

Secondly, I feel like i speak on behalf of a lot of the comic's fan base when I say that I'm SUPER conflicted with Lydia. I want to hate her, but at the same time, you kinda have to think about how this is the only behavior she knows. We don't know how The Whisperers and Alpha formed their ideologies, where they came from, or anything relating to their origin really; really makes the reader think. Now THAT'S good writing!

Alright, I guess that's it other than some babble I was going to ramble on about involving how awesome the upcoming covers are and how excited I am for these upcoming issues (150 LET'S GO), but I don't wanna take up too much space if this gets published. Anyway, keep up the great work, team!

Sincerely,
Jake Harper, Rowlett, Texas

Thanks for the compliments RE: Lydia. Sorry you weren't into the pacing of 145 and 146 so much. To me, so many people died, we really needed to honor that. But I do get how silent pages make readers feel like things are moving too slow, or that they didn't get their money's worth. I have to remind you that you're paying for the words and the art... and when the art tells the story as well as Charlie's art did in those issues... words would just clutter it up.

Hi, I am Asfandiyar (Nickname: Afi) all the way from Pakistan. Just read issue 147 and feeling the pressure though I think Lydia is a better person than shooting someone down and I hope she becomes a regular of the comic. Just a quick question: Where is Dwight? He showed up and left after talks of not being leader anymore.

TWD comic is literally my obsession right now and I am going to continue supporting it. Thankyou Robert, Charlie and the entire team.

There's been a steady stream of Dwight lately, and he'll factor into Rick's plans very soon (just look at the cover for #151 for quite possibly the most hardcore Dwight image ever).

Dear Mr. Kirkman and crew,

First off I would like you guys to know that I am a huge fan of all of the walking dead, (both the comics, and the show) I always get super pissed when I finish an issue and it is such a good cliffhanger and then I realize that I have to wait another month until I can find out what happens next. I always read the letterhacks in the back of my issues and I am writing this right after issue #147 because I have some questions and concerns that I would like to get answered.

1) Honestly I loved Rick, I thought he was a complete bad ass, but I mean come on, ever since the all out war story arc it seems like he is this calm peacfull guy... wouldnt he become crazy or at least more angry after all of the stuff negan did to him, so a lot of people say that he should resign and someone else should be the

leader, but I would way rather have rick just become a bad ass again. I just think that in the zombie apocalypse you cant have a nice calm rick... you need a negan like rick.

That is the main dramatic question of this storyline (how Rick will respond to the first crisis in a very long time)... and remember, not everyone has seen him under pressure. There's a lot of newbies in Alexandria, or people that've moved communities after All Out War... and respect and trust are things that need to be continually earned. But the debate about Rick's leadership ability is boiling hot right now...

2) Also on the walking dead wiki it says that issue 151 is TBA so is issue 150 a possible end to the series?

The end?! If this series ever ends, that announcement will be loud and clear. #151 is already drawn.

3) what is going on with the kingdom and the saviors... they are hardly ever talked about or shown in the recent issues. Also who will the kingdom appoint as their new leader since ezikiel is dead... I dont see any potential candidates for president over at the Kingdom so will that ever get adressed?

Yes, that will get addressed very soon. Stay tuned. We'll see more of both communities moving forward.

Plz respond I am a Huge fan of the walking dead and it would be great if you wrote back!!

Jake

We responded!

Hey everyone,

There is something that was talked about in #145 and in the readers' mails of #146 that just doesn't click with me and which I think need to be explained more clearly.

I live in France and import TWD so I'm a little late to the party and haven't read #147 yet, so maybe this was explained in it.

Lydia suggests that the Whisperers probably use the skins of all the characters that got spiked in #144 to wear. How does this even work? If their heads were cut, how do the bodies 'turn' ? Do every corpse turn even if the head is cut? Wasn't the whole point of stopping the brain of a dead person exactly not to make him turn? And if the bodies don't turn, what use could the whisperer make of the skins?

Dead flesh is dead flesh. The bodies don't need to be active zombies to mask human smell. The Whisperers can use any dead skin to make their skin suits.

About Rosita - her being pregnant was probably the reason why everyone consider her death so important. In essence, Ezekiel had a bigger role than her in the story, so it makes sense

he gets the full page death; but Rosita's death is probably just as important on another level. It just make it feel like newborn babies don't make it in this world, yet, which is a very depressing thought for the future, tons of lives taken out but no new ones. Judith died soon, now this... only Maggie's baby made it (so far).

Anyway my point is - I too didn't feel like Ezekiel's full page death felt a little off, I mean, it was justified, but it gives the feeling that all the other deaths on the 2 previous pages aren't as important, while at least Rosita's is....

Ezekiel was a big death. I was attempting to do a misdirect there, so before you turned the page, you thought it was Michonne's head on the spike. That's why the panel before the page turn is just dreadlocks in the wind. It was done more for storytelling purposes than to make one death more important than the others.

I can't wait to see more of Eugene's development. I thought he'd become a useless broken man, but it looks like it made him strong.

Keep up the good work!

Corentin

P.S:TWD is what got me back into reading comics and now I read tons everyday so thanks for that!

Great news! Very cool to hear that!

Where is Eduardo! Nobody cares for Eduardo...

Matthew

He's in this issue! How's that for timing? I always love it when it works out this way.

Boo yah!

Hi guys! I love The Walking Dead is my favourite comic and TV show this is my first time writing in and I just want to know what the hell did Lydia do with Carl's hat he's had that hat for 143 issues she better not have lost it! and now she's pointing a gun at Carl and Andrea! How dare she I thought we could trust her :(I hope they have a lost and found at Alexandria for Carl's hat...

-Aaron from UK

They were in such a hurry to leave Alexandria that the hat got left behind. Or an artist forgot to draw it. Six of one, half dozen of another, y'know?

Robert Kirkman,

This is a late response concerning issue 147, but I figured I would respond anyways. The thing is, Lydia grew up in an animalistic group of survivors: that held ideals where pedophilia and skinning humans for leather were a staple within their community. they used scare tactics

involving kidnapping and execution of innocent people in a manor fitting of king Charles II. She explained to Carl in an earlier issue of how her own serial rape wasn't a big deal because of the culture she was brought up in. my point is: she has experienced enough brutality to have her faith in humanity reduced to somewhere near absolute zero, so my question is; what made you decide to have her act so naive in her reaction to Andrea asking Gus to lie about their whereabouts? first off, seeing that the whisperers survive through deception and camouflage, she would be able to easily grasp the concept of needing to observe unseen in times of uncertainty... If that isn't enough, she allowed herself to be continually raped, beaten, and willingly wore zombie skin by simply being told that's how things were, so at the very least she would have taken Andreas explanation at face value... lastly, she was willing to stay with her mom anyways, so why would she freak out over the possibility of going back? I am a huge fan of your work and am inspired by your ability to keep developing a story without making character changes from left field, but rather evolving them naturally. That being said, this is the first instance in which I am unable to construct believable reasoning behind the reaction of a character.

sincerely,
Zachary Thomas

Carl has shown her a new way of life. So I think after having lived with him for a few days, the idea of going back to the previous life... which was all she knew up to that point, would be something she would be against.

Also, she wasn't being naive about Andrea telling Gus to lie. She was just uncomfortable seeing a person she knew as honest suddenly lying. The whole thing made her suspicious and led to her pulling the gun on Andrea.

Hello TWD folks long time reader first time
wrighting in...

In response to John Smith, N.B letter in 147... WTF is with you! One thing the TWD does a real good job at doing is showing having vagina does not equal weakness. There are many badass female characters throughout the whole series, that totally would kick you and your macho man balls ass in.. your all like 'what, Rick grow a vagina' so what if he did, as having a Vagina does not make a person weak. Stop fucking equating feminine with weakness and stop polluting the letter hacks with your macho misogynist garbage. Actually try to learn something from the many badass ladies that are in the story that could even kick old big balls Rick Grimes face in... Anyways, thanks for the years of reading and I look forward to many more... but yo, think about what you publish in the letter hacks, otherwise I am sure Michonne will crawl out of the pages of your comic, and chop all your misogynistic-zombie heads off...

Anais, NFLD

I'm with you 100%. So no, Rick doesn't have a vagina, nor can he grow one, nor

would we have him grow one since that's some outlandish shit. We run a lot of letters where we don't agree with everything that's contained within. As I remember it, John Smith brought up some questions that a lot of readers had, and he probably did it in a more colorful way. People are entitled to have wrong opinions... especially us. We do it ALL the time. But what we can all agree on is that vaginas are cool and tough.

Robert and Sean,

(I'm racking my brain to remember if you've discussed this in previous hacks. I don't think so)

What is the status on dental hygiene in the Walking Dead? In the comics, is there a dentist? (Have I seen the dentist and outright ignored it?) I ask, because today I was at the dentist for the first time in six years. (I'm not sorry.) Also - six years is roughly my own estimate of the comics timeline, so as a frame of reference: I obsessively brush and floss in my regular cosmopolitan life, and yet, I still had 3 new cavities, 2 old fillings that need replacement, and 2 "cautionary zones" where I'm instructed to use sensodyne for the rest of my l i f e. I can only imagine how life regularly on the road, avoiding walkers and surviving must feel (/ grody).

I can't imagine the large majority of people would immediately think to care about dental health in the zombie apocalypse, especially as most people don't generally care in their regular life. And yet! The mouth is the gateway to the rest of the body. (E.g. the flu virus can live in your mouth for up to 3 days before it gets you sick.) I have to imagine that without regular maintenance - brushing and flossing, and professional cleaning and checkups - many must be getting rotting teeth, bleeding gums, rancid gingivitis, with some people outright dying from abscesses.

Please help
xoxo
Vinnie
Detroit, MI, USA

When dental issues become interesting, we'll touch on them. I think there are plenty of hygienic issues we could spend time exploring in WALKING DEAD, but I think most of them would be boring. So we'll steer clear of those kinds of things until an interesting story involving them presents itself.

So stay tuned, dental fans!

Next month, THE WALKING DEAD #150. 30 pages of story. That's all we're saying, for now.

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be awesome! I'll add that, too.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

More comics die every month than characters in THE WALKING DEAD. And yet here we are... One hundred and fifty issues. If you're reading this, you already know THE WALKING DEAD is a pretty special comic. It's grown far beyond the comic Robert created in Backwoods, Kentucky... and become this thing of ours, that everyone can share in. This issue is a celebration, of the tremendously talented creators who've worked on this comic for the past twelve years, and the fans who've been here since Day One... or just sacrificed an entire weekend to getting caught up... as well as a declaration.

Not only of Rick's new war, but to the vitality of comics... of how a personal vision and story can thrive for all these many years. A lot's changed in the comic market and in the world of TWD since 2003... and you can expect us to keep changing and growing and getting better. The team is already inventing new ways to shock, frighten and thrill you... and make you care so goddamn much you cry. To the next one hundred and fifty issues!

Wow, Sean... you make things sound so grandiose. It's just one hundred and fifty issues... oh, wait... I guess that's a big deal. I'm not going to dive down the rabbit hole of "oh, my god, my life was so different when I started this book." But only because I've done it many times before and I think you all know how much this book has changed my life. This book means a whole lot to me and I feel like it's a gift to be able to write it for as long as I have (with no end in sight), so thanks to all of you for the support over the years.

Also, big thanks to Ryan Ottley, Jason Latour and Tony Moore for providing some sweet variant covers for this book. Ryan and I have been working together on INVINCIBLE for well over a decade at this point, and yet I'm always dying to do more stuff with him. Jason Latour is the artist and co-writer of SOUTHERN BASTARDS, a fantastic book coming out from Image Comics. I've known Jason, again, for well over a decade. I published back-up stories by him in the back of BATTLE POPE and as awesome as that stuff is... I could never have imagined what an amazing artist he would eventually become. And then there's Tony Moore, currently a gentleman of leisure, with no monthly comic for me to promote here. Tony does provide covers for Deadpool and other random books here and there. I recently saw his art in an issue of MAD MAGAZINE, which was almost as cool for me as it must have been

for him, because I know how special that publication was to both of us in our youth. I've known Tony since we were both in seventh grade (yep), and you may recall, Tony drew the first six issues of this very book, along with providing covers up through issue 24. It's been a long winding road back to this point, but I have to admit, it was pretty awesome to have Tony back for this cover. Maybe we'll do it again at some point.

So yeah... 150. I hope you guys and gals enjoyed the story this issue. For me, it's a turning point, and that's cool, but for the most part, it's setting the stage for some really big, really cool stuff to come. The next few issues... yeah... big stuff ahead, so stay tuned.

Now let's answer some mail!

Negan's help?! We knew it was coming. After all that he did, we wanted it to come. How twisted is that?

You guys revel in tormenting us. I haven't recovered from Ezekiel and Rosita. Hell, that Glenn panel STILL haunts me after all this time - Adlard's work is incredible.

Is it wrong that I got a kick out of the barroom brawl and was hoping it would escalate? I actually think I want to see this all stripped away from Rick and Maggie. It bothers me that they never earned what has been built. Early on we wondered if they would even survive. Later, it was could they build anything meaningful? But the answer was taken away when they found Alexandria and the Hilltop - ready made communities and outposts. Rick never had to build them. He never earned it. Others succeeded in a big way where he and his group failed. Could Maggie have ever achieved what Gregory achieved with the Hilltop? I don't think so. And look what she did to him.

For all the hardships, I wonder if you made it too easy for Maggie and Rick? The Alexandria Cuckoos.

I'm taking this at face value since my sarcasm detector may be broken. Your argument's a bit like saying any president after George Washington just inherited a great situation.

Serious question: how does Alpha remain so clean when she takes off her skin and how did the people at the fair not wretch from the stench of her?

Keep up the great work!
Jay

The skin they wear is clean on the inside, dirty on the outside. So it doesn't really stain them. As for the smell, I'm sure she put some perfume behind her ears before she snuck into Alexandria.

Dear Kirkman, Sean, and the Walking Dead Crew,

Letter Hacks crack me up. I have never written in, though I have been reading for almost a decade now. Please accept my thanks for a great story so far, with more to come. I have been thinking about what Rick says to Michonne in issue 147 about there being no secrets between him and Andrea...and I also noticed that you bluntly said that Andrea will die in issue 150 in the Letter Hacks of issue 148. We shall wait and see about that.

Did we say she dies in 150? We really meant 160. We dictate our responses into our phones, and sometimes those fuckers get things wrong and I do a horrible job of catching those mistakes.

Also, sometimes we completely lie in the letters columns just to mess with people. You'll see what we're talking about when issue 160 comes out.

If she dies I will miss her presence in the comic, but every death moves the story in some way. What I am really curious about is whether or not Rick and Carl's secret will be revealed to Andrea before she goes...Carl killed Ben and she never found out! And yet there Rick is, claiming to Michonne that they keep no secrets between each other! You have set up a lot of moving parts in the last few issues and with 150 only a couple months away...and potentially a big character death coming...will we ever revisit that event? Rick almost told her way back sometime after the No Way Out arc, but held himself back. Really interested to see the revelations there if that surfaces. Please keep up with the good work! Off topic note - enjoyed seeing that Gabriel made a brief appearance in issue 148 as well! Looking forward to the next issues! I appreciate that Invincible and Walking Dead come out on separate days during the month so I have more to look forward to after I read Walking Dead... and before you plug Outcast, don't worry I read that too.

Regards,

Sam
Cambridge, MA

There is a story to be told involving Andrea finding out Carl killed Ben. That's all I'll say about that. Stay tuned... maybe sooner than you think.

P.S. I think we are due for a McFarlane exclusive Alpha figure from Skybound. That would look nice next to the rest of the gang. Make this happen.

We did make that happen! That figure's now available to SVASSHH! your other figures' necks.

Really? Negan?

I dunno. I don't want to pre-judge before I hear Rick's justification for (apparently) trusting Negan (I.e., not to just betray him to the whisperers out of spite), but that's one tough fucking sell.

You haven't disappointed me in 148 issues, but you better not half-ass this.

Art

I hope your fears were allayed by page one of #149. Negan's worth listening to, right? He was a fairly successful community leader, if not outright despicable in how he lead. Plus he's been in jail for over 24 issues, so any excuse to give him some shine.

Dear TWD Team,

I've been reading The Walking Dead since I was 13 (currently 23). That same year, I started working at a local comic store and someone recommend the series to me. I read the first four TPBs on a 6 hour bus ride and was instantly hooked. I'm proud to say that I've read the single issues since #25. TWD (along with Invincible and Outcast) are the only three comics I'll read out of chronological order when I've got that classic 5-week-behind-on-my-pull-stack laying on a desk somewhere. The series is one of the few ongoing that I've read where I've rarely had any major complaints (which is something to be said as a primarily Marvel reader). Any change in the book is always necessary and at the right times. Just pure gold. The art and colours have always been on point. And the lettering? Love it. It always seems that the perfect tone is being conveyed. Anyways guys, just wanted to say I've loved this book for 10 years now, #1-148 were absolute gold and I can not wait to read whatever else is in store.

Thank you

Drew Zavitz
Windsor Ontario Canada

I just think it's amazing that a comic series can span that large a part of your life, and remain a constant part of it. Please check in when you're 33, Drew!

If you need me, I'll be over here... being old.

Hi TWD,

Did you know that on eBay issue #1 of TWD is for sale as high as \$13,000? Most other copies are for sale around \$2000. How do you feel about your comics as a long-term financial investment? Are there any other issues you feel should be worth just as much?

All the issues in my office?

Worth just as much? No. Issue 19, I think, is the second most valuable issue.

People ask me about this a lot. People get me to sign comics for them and they say, "Don't worry, I'm not going to sell it." I guess some creators get bugged by fans making a profit off of them, but not me. I've met a few people over the years who tell me what they bought with the money they got from their issue 1s. I think that's awesome. Laptops, down payments on cars, engagement rings... all kinds of stuff.

Pizza and beer, right here!

I think it's one of the coolest things ever. Sorry to go off on a tangent there, but I wanted to get that on the record.

Glad to see that Negan will be back into the action. Did you have to give him that evil smile at the end of #148? I'd like to think he has some chance at redemption, but that smile makes me think he'll take this opportunity to wedge his way back into power somehow. Please remember that you've told us you'd give us his backstory someday...

Thanks,
Eric in Venezuela

And here we end another issue with another evil smile. Rule of Three suggests that the next time he does it, watch out.

I'm just in a rut.

Hello Robert,

In the era of multiple variant covers for so many books, Walking Dead 148 showed why this comic stands above so many others. So many comics now just splash a character in a random action pose (and there's a good chance the character on the cover might not even be in the book) for the main cover or variant covers, and give the reader no glimpse about the story inside. Walking Dead 148 has the intriguing image of Alpha crying on the cover- if you're a fan of the book, you're compelled to read it, to see what's going on, hoping to gain some insight into what's going on inside the head of this usually ruthless villain. Solid work all around, guys.

Charlie's done some extremely strong work on the upcoming covers. He just drew four in a row and I can't tell which is my favorite. Regarding variant covers... we did some for this issue, like most of our anniversary issues. (And Jason Latour, Tony Moore and Ryan Ottley all did fantastic work. Unable to choose a favorite there, as well.) Our approach there is usually more evergreen, and less story specific, and really just get out of the artist's way.

Just popping in to agree that Charlie's latest batch of covers is spectacular. Just wait until you see them, people. Awesome stuff.

Now, the second half of the issue is where things became truly interesting. Rick not only has to worry about the looming threat of Alpha, but now he has half of the Community crying out for blood and revenge. Andrea and Carl are out of the picture for the moment, and he no longer has

the physical ability to impose his will on others, like the old Rick did. A fistfight breaks out, and it's shown that he's a shell of his former self; the only way he's able to extricate himself from the situation is to fire a gun.

This made me think of issue 141, where Rick dressed down Olivia for forgetting to lock Negan's cell. Robert went out of his way to show what a bully Rick could be in that issue, and like many bullies, he can easily intimidate the weak, but is lost when he encounters a real threat like the Whisperers or his own bloodthirsty townsfolk... and, without his family around, he has no one to turn to but the strongest, most fascinating character created for the Walking Dead, Negan. In the harsh world of the Walking Dead, can someone without the ability to hold his or her own in a fight really lead a group? I think this is the setup for Rick to go down, and for Negan to take over. That's when things get interesting.

Joe Kazmer
Pittsburgh, PA

I wouldn't characterize Rick as a bully. It was a moment to reemphasize the stakes. Rick's seen how slip-ups can lead to catastrophe, and chose a hardline here. And I hope this issue clarifies any doubt you have about Rick holding his own. Yeesh.

Before I go on my rant I may as well praise you Kirkman. I was ambivalent at first about the time jump but I think the stuff you're writing now is some of the best stuff you've ever written and the comic feels more fresh. The way the characters have developed since the time jump feels mostly natural and the new characters you've created are the best for a long time, Dante and Lydia are new favorites for me.

But here's my rant - Eugene is my absolute favorite character I like the way he's evolved from a selfish burden in the group to someone who has been loyal to the group and the most productive member of the Alexandrians. I like the way he's changed from a coward into a man of action. What I don't like is that I feel that he's going to betray Rick and do something completely irrational and stupid (which he said he wouldn't do in issue 146). I don't want to see him become the villain Robert please don't do this.

Lou, Northern Ireland

Eugene's in a unique position, and can really be honest with Rick and speak his mind, even if Rick doesn't agree. And Rick is always going to take him seriously and take into account his emotional temperature. Eugene is still reeling from Rosita's death, and recovery is going to take a while. Could Eugene betray the group? Absolutely. But right now he's probably their most valuable member, and fast becoming one of my favorites.

I don't really have a question but I just want to say thank you...thank you for releasing Negan from that jail cell! I can't wait to read the new comics!! I absolutely love Negan, even more so

than Rick!! I'd be one of his apocalyptic wives, just saying!! Lol!!! Thanks for your time and please don't kill Negan off, lmao!!

-Stephanie

Settle down, Negan's still in his cell. Good luck with the marriage proposal.

As Rick said, Negan "is never getting out of that cell." So don't get your hopes up.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

Michonne was missing from # 127 until 139. Was that period fully explained from her conversation with Rick in # 140? Or is the Telltale game coming out meant to fill in the rest of her story? If the game is going to detail what she did during her absence are you writing this story? Or is it like the Governor novels, you and the comic have moved and the story is handed to writer/ team to deal with?

Telltale's writing staff is handling the story. Robert and I have been working closely with them to make sure it comes correct and fits the comic. And expect to see the first episode (of three) in February.

I get the feeling that the Walking Dead has become like star wars, the movies are the core, the canon, and then there is the "expanded universe" of tv series, novels and video games which can be overridden by the movies. Like when Chewbacca dies in one novel, but he is clearly alive in the trailer for the new film.

We don't have nearly that level of "expanded universe" material. And usually it's set far outside the comic's purview, so that the creators can cut loose as long as they obey the established timeline and rules. The Michonne game is definitely the closest an "expanded universe" story has tied into the comic, and there was a convenient gap for Telltale to flesh out. Also, how cool is it that you get to BE Michonne?

What is the final decider if a character dies, like Andrea in the tv show, is the comic the final say on her fate or is the TV show like an alternate version of the main walking dead characters?

Kind regards,
Jack

The only things I'd say are officially in the same continuity as the comic, are the Telltale games and the novels. Everything else, like the TV show, takes place in another continuity, clearly.

Greetings,

The Walking Dead #148 was a pretty great issue. I'd give it a 8/10 and I cannot wait for Issue #149's "The Devil On Your Shoulder"!

But nonetheless, I have a mere 5 (somewhat short... hopefully) questions I must ask the

creator of The Walking Dead (and Invincible... and Outcast... etc.) that I really hope you can answer.

1. Why have you been making the end of every issue since #146 look REALLY shocking/ interesting to make us yearn for the next issue? I guess that's what writers do, but Eugene's idea was shut down pretty quick and Lydia's "gunfight" with Andrea was also shut down (In a weak FOUR pages that could've been used for more SAVIORS?) as well. So... what gives?

Well... I feel like I've been ending every issue with cliffhangers since the very beginning. Some are better than others. Maybe the last few have been a string of weak fake-out cliffhangers (that are quickly resolved in the next issue). Sorry for that. I'll try to do those less often. I would argue all of those moments were valid, and had pay-offs... but holding the moments over between issues makes them seem more important than they are meant to be. That's one area where reading the collections is probably a smoother experience.

2. Oh, my Lord! Gabriel's back! With a BEARD! I love how in the middle of basically a BAR FIGHT (Which I have no clue as to how those go) he can just stand there and just mutter something about "his Lord". EPIC! You mentioned in Issue #116 that there'll be more Gabriel but we've only seen him THREE times since, and his most recent issue is when he finally talks! My question is... will we EVER see Father Gabriel do something that isn't just him standing around?

Soon. Very soon.

3. Dwight! Saviors! Sanctuary! Great to see that fella with a scarred face! Looks like that savior chick isn't gonna let him leave the leader position. With Negan presumably getting released, is Negan coming back as the LEADER of The Saviors?!

Great question. Who IS the next leader of the Saviors?

Been reading since 2012, been collecting the single issues since #113, and proud to be an OG+ Walker member.
Andy Gasal
Vermont

P.S., CANNOT wait until Issue #150! Wait, that's the issue this letter will appear in... what happens to Andrea?!

Find out in #160!

Next month, one hundred and fifty-one! Training begins.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Next issue... all kinds of awesome stuff kicks off. It's the beginning of a bold new era in THE WALKING DEAD! Don't miss it!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

My most recent favorite ending to an issue... WHAT DOES IT MEAN?! Who's on the other end? What do they want? You folks have fun teasing it out while you wait for the next issue, while we get busy with some letters.

Yeah, let's just dive right in! I'm not commenting on that ending at all.

You guys wrecked my brain! At the end of 148 when Rick tells Negan he needs his help, this whole world of possibilities opens up! I spent a month just imagining all the havoc Negan was going to wreak, how the citizens of Alexandria were going to take it when Rick told them he was letting Negan out of his cell, how Maggie was going to react after just being lectured about violence but then seeing Rick allow Negan to go off on a spree. Then 149 rolls around, and on page one Rick pulls the old bait and switch and tells us Negan isn't getting out anytime soon. Maybe I should have seen it coming, but i definitely thought (and maybe hoped, just a little) I'd see Negan out and about. Who DOESN'T want to see that?! And come on, who ISN'T looking forward to hearing what clever little back-handed jokes he has for the citizens when they see him out?! (That Glenn joke - priceless! Too soon? not for Negan!)

Anyways, I loved it! I'm pumped to see what happens. I love that the sweetest TWD villain is now in the cabinet of the Hero we all love. Keep up the great work!

Kris

I think you folks love when you don't get what you want, more than us giving it to you. As for Rick... it's certainly taken him less time to return to Negan than in the past.

Also, I feel the need to point out that Rick has said many times that Negan is NEVER getting out of that cell. So... y'know... don't get your hopes up.

Just like Robert has said I can NEVER leave Skybound. So... y'know... #FREESEAN

(God, that made me feel like such a Sina there...)

Dear Kirkman and team,

I've read The Walking Dead for over 10 years, all 149 issues to date and I've got a problem! I have never seen a single one of our beloved survivors find a package of Ramen noodles?!

You mean to tell me that through Georgia's countryside and all the way to D.C not a package of noodles? C'MON!

Has any food's reputation in America suffered as much as ramen? Do you know how enjoyable a bowl of ramen is to a package of Maruchan noodles? They're COMPLETELY separate products. So I hope no one in TWD ever has to eat those goddamn things ever again. Here's to a better world without those fucking flavor packets.

I really enjoyed seeing Rick so desperate for Answer he went to Negan for answers and actually taking his advice!? Could you please stop being a tease and let Negan out of "Alexandria County Jail"! The hell he could wreck on the whisperers...

Oh me oh my

Josh

Negan is NEVER getting out of that cell.

EVER.

Sorry.

Dear Sean and Robert,

While many people will surely be focusing on Negan's resurgence this week, I wanted to talk about one of my favorite characters, Eugene.

He is clearly very shaken by the events from 144, and is beginning to show some cracks in his ponytail pragmatism. However, I found the panels in 149 where he tuned into the radio to be very interesting. It was originally Eugene's idea to travel to D.C. based off the fake government broadcast, which was foiled

by Rick and put him at odds with Abraham / Rosita, the members of his original group. Since then and unfortunately Abe and Rosita have parted ways with us.

Is Eugene's radio obsession somehow tied with this? Does he feel he can compensate for their deaths by discovering something (perhaps US Government related) on the radio? Maybe sort of survivor's guilt since he and the radio were the reason why they came to D.C. in the first place. Honestly, that's the only reason I see for him crying after only getting static on the radio. Also with Rick's decision to tell Eugene about the People's Army of Alexandria and the cover for Issue 151, I'm seeing a lot of military themes coming into play soon, perhaps building to a return to the US Military? They've been oddly silent the whole series except for providing various munitions for our survivors.

Anyways, keep up the great work, and by the way, a free shoutout to you guys and the rest of the Invincible team! Can't wait for the Reboot finale, I was skeptical at first, but seeing Rex and Cecil again made me forget it all. Part 3 better rock my world. If not, well, I'm still gonna keep reading.

Congrats on 150 Issues!

Degan
Ithaca, NY

Eugene is definitely looking for something to fill the void in his life and keep his mind off losing Rosita and the baby. As a technical guy, I think he thought getting the radio to work would be a fun challenge... but now that there's someone on the other end... well... I don't think Eugene was really expecting that. Stay tuned for big things.

Dear Robert and the rest of the Walking Dead crew,

After binge reading 149 issues of the Walking Dead in about 2 months, I am pleased to say this comic book has exceeded expectations. I am excited to see what you guys will do with Negan in the future and whether he can become an ally of Rick or if he will remain an enemy.

My question is, Did Carl have protection when he "had fun" with Lydia? It's not like they can go down to a store and grab it. Is he not worried about unwanted pregnancies?

Cheers,
Lachlan Morris, Australia

I'm chalking it up to them being completely irresponsible. The only type of protection this society talks about is fences and guns and spiked bats. Who's going to broach the use of contraceptives? Or is the withdrawal method and charting menstrual flow the only weapons this society has? Is "Carl Poppa" soon to be a real thing? I got more questions about this than Eugene's radio!

Stay tuned.

Guys,

Your sweet kiss, felt just right, but it was not enough for Dwight's delight. He left with Lucille, his grip was tight. Seeing them together was quite a sight! Cant wait to see him bashin brains with all his might. When Negan finds out, will they fight? Lucille is Dwight's now, and that's alright!

Dan from NY

Poetry!

Yawn.

Dear Kirkman, Charlie and crew
Let me just start off in saying that Charlie is killing it with these covers these past few issues. Issue 149's cover had me dancing for joy at my local comic book store!

Wait 'til you see the next couple covers—Charlie straight up kills more. He's going to jail for murder because of the next string of covers.

Can we get a variant but Rick dressed as Princess Leia and Negan as Luke Skywalker or am I asking too much? Anyways, I'm absolutely loving the conversation between Rick and Negan! I missed that crazy, foul-mouthed man. Negan's request for a sad eye-contactless hand job was a hilarious way to end their conversation and I should have expected nothing less from you Kirkman. I can't wait for next issue! Hopefully I'll be able to snag one of Tony Moore's amazing variant cover of issue 150 to fit perfectly next to my 10th anniversary edition!

Kirkman one more thing... WHERE THE HELL CAN I FIND THOSE INVINCIBLE FIGURINES FROM TWD MID-SEASON FINALE?!

Thank you for everything you and your crew do!

Your loyal (team Negan) fan,
Lauren McGrath, Chicago, IL

Those are Invincible Minimates, available in our online store at www.skybound.com. Any chance we can sneak Skybound merch into the show, we'll certainly try.

Here's a direct link <http://store.skybound.com/products/invincible-minimates> to the Minimates. But please do shop around, there's all kinds of cool stuff available.

And hey, we got that Tony Moore variant for issue 150... cool, huh?!

(Season's) Greetings,

I loved Issue #149 and it was a great build to what The Walking Dead #150 will bring to the table, but I'm concerned as to your Devil/Evil/Satan-related Issue titles for both The Walking Dead and Outcast.

Issue #149 has "The Devil On Your Shoulder", while Outcast has Issue #14 say "Get Behind Me Satan"

The fact that both issues came out in December, when all the big craze on holiday and Christmas happening as well. Christmas has Christ in the name, and Jesus Christ is God's son, right? (I have no complete knowledge of the Christian religion, so sue me) And the Devil is God's enemy, while Satan is what dyslexic people might see when they read "Santa"... THE CONNECTIONS ARE ENDLESS.

What I am getting at here is that you're a devil-worshipper. That explains why you make horror comics and your first comic (Battle Pope) was some parody on faith or whatever and why you made The Walking Dead and Outcast.

Have a happy new year! Indulge in whatever the fuck you're doing! Make a New Year's Resolution on being more of a non-Devil than the latter!

Let's hope to see 2016,
Andy Gasal
Vermont

I feel the need to state for the record that I am not, nor have I ever been, a devil worshipper.

But who knows what the future holds?!

Dear Letter Hacks,
Eugene wasn't being realistic about his CB radio. No community of survivors is going to be on the airways asking for help or attention, see how well that worked out for Rick's fair?

Nope, someone's out there. Believe it!

What the CB radio is good for is communications between Rick & Co. I.e. if the crew Eugene had for moving the herd, in #127, were using radios instead of having to stop and shout at each other then the riders could gotten into position that much faster to use the horn. Eugene could also have command over several teams at a distance moving them around like pieces on a chess board. This then turns the herd from something like a storm that needs to be dodged into a weapon akin to what Alpha was threatening them with.

Radios are also something a military needs...

Kind regards,

Jason,
Kwinana, Western Australia

Yes, they are... yes, they are...

Dear TWD team

I first want to say that I really really love The Walking Dead. I just have a little question for you guys. What's going on with Brianna son? We saw him in issue 111 and we never saw him again. So, is he dead? Hope you answer me.

Cedrick Leclerc-Doyon
Montreal, Qc

Well, he's older now. So he and Brianna aren't exactly joined at the hip. We'll be seeing him soon, don't worry. He's around.

See you in March, a week earlier than normal. TWD will now hit stores the first week of every month. Everyone's cool with that, right?

-Sean Mackiewicz

The Walking Dead... sooner?! WOW! I... I need to get back to work!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

You're a goddamn dirty liar, Robert. Last issue you wrote:

Negan is NEVER getting out of that cell.

EVER.

Sorry.

Sooooo... unless this is some early onset something or other... you're a goddamn dirty liar. BUT Negan's out, which will make all the Hacks lunatics ecstatic for a number of perverse reasons, which they're already writing and sending WITHOUT proofreading.

...I guess this is going to be the tone of Hacks this month. Roll with it.

Listen, in my opinion, there's a special kind of devoted reader who pours through Letter Hacks each and every month. And those readers... I like to enhance the experience for them as best I can. Sometimes it's by lying about a thing I know is coming VERY soon, other times it's by seemingly spoiling big things which sometimes come to pass... and sometimes don't. It makes things more fun!

So read Letter Hacks, people! You never know what's going to happen!

Dear TWD,

I've just read issue 150 today and I have to say, good fucking shit. That new girl, Laura who has been taking a liking to Dwight seems interesting, what's her deal?

She digs Dwight. Don't you?

And on another note, why is Dwight bringing Lucille to Alexandria, he doesn't seem to be wielding it, what's up with that?

I don't think you want to leave Lucille around, for some creepy Savior to start swinging around and proclaiming themselves the next Negan. Call me crazy.

This is addressed very soon. Keep reading.

Next up is another beatdown for Rick followed by a second throat bite in the series from the same guy!! That was really perfect timing though, I was really starting for fear for his life, he was taking a pretty nasty beating! Good artwork here also.

The next thing I absolutely need to say, I LOVED the two page chanting part. It was lead up so nicely with that great speech from Rick, giving the people what they want to hear. Everyone looked so happy, except Jesus. I thought that was an amazing touch if I'm right here, I think that Jesus is the only one in that whole crowd who is actually thinking about the future, or perhaps because he knows he would have a very large role in said army, but I think it's a bit of both. Last thing I'm gonna say is I love the Character Jesus and I need to see more of him, he's been a

little absent lately aside from minor appearances, what gives?

Jesus is sticking around Alexandria for the time being. You'll even see him next issue.

Alright thats all I got for my first ever time writing to letterhacks. That's a pretty good reason to publish eh? But seriously, amazing monthly comic, keep up the great work!

From,
Jared J

Thanks for writing in, Jared!

"we have worked to make ourselves safe... and in doing so... we have made ourselves weak"

Rick has obviously become weak after so many years making Alexandria a safe place to live! But I couldn't believe when he was almost killed by one of his own! I like the bad ass Dracula move Rick pulled as he took a hamburger-sized bite out of his assailant's throat! Mmmmmm, blood! I'm actually very glad TWD is in black & white because if all that blood were in color, I'd feel a little woozy after that scene. Thanks!

So the short scene with Andrea walking through the house with a candle confused me a little bit. It's fine that she checked on Carl and his girlfriend to make sure they're alright but why would she almost open their door again after catching them in the act?

~Katie,
Berea, Kentucky

Because maybe she's not entirely comfortable with underage sex going on under her watch? Has society degraded to the point where we're questioning why a guardian wouldn't—at the very least—make sure they're being smart about it? I don't know. I'm kinda thinking I should stay away from questions concerning sex between minors. (We're still operating on the basis that the concept of "minors" exists, right?) But adult responsibilities being thrust on children makes it a much grayer area, I guess. It's the age-old discussion about sending teens off to war that can't legally drink yet.

Yes, that's it exactly. She was deciding whether or not to interrupt them... and in the end, she decided not to.

150!! Oh my gosh I need more!!! A whole month? Can't wait! Had to write in about this crazy issue!

First off thank you for doing such an awesome job with everything! Each issue makes me love TWD even more! The first issue I picked up was 126 after I had a buddy give me everything else up to that point and read it all within a few weeks. I'm so glad I did. Plus I started reading so many other comics since then.

A few things I wanted to point out from 150.

Rick and his neck biting, oh man. What is this the 2nd? 3rd time? It always is a trip when it happens.

Second. Last time was #57.

To be completely frank... I struggled with this a lot. I didn't want it to seem repetitive, and it didn't help that this scene was adapted into the show much more recently. So I was trying to find something new, but with Rick in the position, vulnerable like he was... it was really the only thing that made sense. And honestly, while it is something he's done before (although under much different circumstances), I can't help but think that in real life, in that situation no one would ever consider if they were being repetitive or not... so I went for it.

The last two pages are my favorite. The crowd chanting Ricks name is awesome and Negan's devilish grin is perfect. Makes me excited to see what happens. But I noticed something about the crowd. Jesus doesn't seem to be happy about what's going to happen. The look on his face drew me in. Plus it looks like he has his arms down not fist pumping the air like everyone else. It will be interesting to see what happens with him and if he will be in support of what's going on or not. Gabriel at least looks like he may be in support of it. Can't wait to find out.

Thanks again for the awesome comic!

Sincerely,
Cal

American Fork, Utah

A lot of you have written in about this Jesus thing. Interesting...

Very interesting.

HI CREW!

First of all, the cover for #151 looks like a KILLER, Dwight is really turning out to be a badass character. First I thought of him as a toady and not fit for a leader, but I guess something changed. I bet he will lead the new army, right? Maybe Negan by his side... You always do this! I am super excited to see Negan develop in the future, especially since he was away for so long. Am I really liking the baddie now? Oh well! I hope you have a good plan for Negan, that awesome fucker. I'm not even mad about Glenn anymore, time heals and so forth. But he definitely has great leader skills, no matter how questionable, but I hope Rick listens to his advice more often. Is he getting softer towards Negan? I know Rick swore not to let him out, but Rick's not a bad guy, I'm sure he starts to feel sorry for poor old Negan.

Shyeah, and monkeys might fly out of our butts.

Damn, Sean... DAMN. Really?

Yea question for Kirkman; I am quite positive I saw some of your early panel instructions (don't know what else to call it), have I been tripping or are there some of those somewhere? I found them quite inspiring and would like to see some more so I can maybe develop my writing skills. I wanna write my own stuff but I can't draw for shit.

We did release a WALKING DEAD SCRIPT BOOK a number of years back. If I recall, it was a single issue that printed the first 6 issues of scripts in a single comic-sized issue. Ebay!

Oh yeah I had a fit in my comicbook store on 9th when the issue wasn't out like normally. I thought they had messed up and left, then had to come back ten minute later to get the volumes I forgot. Not that I complain, but man you should have seen it haha. It's a sensitive issue.

I am waiting for answers, so cheers!
Saara-Maria from Brighton, England

Yeah, 10 years ago Robert published THE WALKING DEAD SCRIPT BOOK #1, which contains exactly what he says it does. I recently came across one of these in the office and had no idea it existed. As a reviewer on Amazon says, "If you think the issues were wordy - just wait until you see what they look like without pictures!" So if you're wondering why The Cutting Room Floor has never happened, blame Amazon reviewer travb.

If I'm not mistaken, that's a direct quote from the solicit text I wrote for that issue. So that was me making fun of me!

Okay cool, Rick just rallied everyone in the old community center or whatever... umm... where's Morton's body? I hope they found it and dealt with it when they found Rick. Surely Rick didn't just tell the town he killed a guy and they all assumed someone else took care of the body.

Thanks,
Ben L.
Sacramento, CA

Fairly certain everyone knows the drill of how to take care of the dead, by now. Man, if they could build a windmill but not stab Mort's brains, that'd be the worst.

Yeah, look out for issue 155 when Morton's discarded body reanimates out of the blue and kills Andrea! Rick will feel so guilty!

Dear TWD Crew,

Wow.... just wow. I just finished reading issue 150 and I'm blown away. Please tell me the new army is going to have a cool name. No but seriously, issue 150 was great. Building up a story for Dwight, Rick getting control of the community again, and of course that last panel with Negan. It's sublime.

Of course, it wouldn't truly be a fan letter without a few questions so here they are:

1) How long will it be until we get an All Out War-esque story arc with the whisperers?

It will be much different than All Out War... but we'll be getting around to that business very soon.

2) Will Rick's knee ever get better? Or even better, will Rick ever be able to stand toe-to-toe with someone again? (I've seen this question pop up in Letter Hacks before, but I can't remember if it's been answered) It was kind of depressing to see someone as badass as Rick Grimes get overpowered by a measly ambush.

Rick is not who he once was... and will never be again. He fights with his brain now... or something. This isn't an action movie. The days of Rick fighting and fighting well... have passed. He's been through too much. But that doesn't make him any less of an interesting character.

3) Going along with my earlier question about a cool name for the army Rick is forming, will we get a cool Rick and Uncle Sam mash-up poster?

You get spraypainted propaganda. That's it for now.

4) I'll be very blunt here, will Rick ever clobber someone with his hook? I can't be the only one who wants to see this right? RIGHT!?!?

Sincerely,
Bon (just some reader in Missouri)

I can't see that not happening eventually... although... it's not a very effective weapon.

Just read issue 150. Rick biting people again... (marauders in show) . That shit always makes me laugh my ass off. Somebody is going to freak out and brain his ass one day for that. We have enough zombies biting people and chewing on guts and here goes Rick becoming that which most fear. Great job and I sincerely hope that the real world doesn't fall apart before the end of the story or the story to end before the end of the world. Timing is everything here guys.

Matthew

I've read this letter a couple times, just to make sure the idea of Rick getting brained is still funny and I'm confident it is.

Dear Robert & Sean,

Bravo for reaching so epically #150 and blah blah. I'm the guy who wrote about Eugene's radio (and is this really over?), and now I'm trying to figure out who Rosita's lover really was, because I'm sure the illegitimate father of her baby will soon do something stupid and jeopardize the army plan, like leaving the groups to personally attack Alpha or something.

Ok, I lied about Eugene's radio. We're all liars here. I guess you just have to accept that our answers are always going to be unreliable.

Only when I know they might spoil something!

So knowing Rosita, this must have been some (without capital-J) alpha male, strong and popular. Let's assume it's someone we know and who is alive (because we all know Mr Kirkman's twisted mind). Who's the possible secret lover?

10) Negan. Let's cross that one right away, shall we? Infidelity is bad enough...

9) Rick. Big leader figure but not the cheating kind. And when you have Andrea...

8) Dante. Oh, come on. The guy almost has "Maggie fanboy" tattooed on his ass.

7) Marco. Meh. Tough-ish. And maybe he and Ken were more than buddies, after all.

6) Sutton. Blacksmith, that's manly. But he looks really happy with his family.

5) Heath. Brave Heath. With the years passing by, could he recover after Denise?

4) Louie or Larry. The surviving beer guy. And we all know the magic of alcohol.

3) Dr. Carson. A man of science who knows a lot about human body. Yeah, sorry.

2) Jesus. Yeah, he's gay. Well... He's into guys. But who said it was exclusive?

1) Siddiq. In charge of the building team, strong, young and kinda cute.

So there you have it. Could we please have a hint?

Ludovic Iadanza from Fucking France
(or what's left of it)

PS: Sorry to embarrass you, but... Cutting room floor?

Blame travb. Whose review, I might add, only 6 out of 8 people found helpful.

ROBERT
DAWG!!! DAWGGGGG C'MONNNN!!!!!! Ok I'm going to give RICK THE PRICK a pass on this issue because he did actually bite Morton like a pitbull. Seriously Bro, Rick has allow Negan too cripple him and now use a cane. Now with this same cane Morton goes "APE" across his cranium . Oh and let's not forget the classic line to VINCENT after sending a bounty hunter (michonne) to fetch him. You plotted to whoop my \$@& . But hey man "WE NEED YOU" . LIKE SERIOUSLY DAWG, YOU GET THE FAT PAIR OF EMOJI EYES AFTER THAT STATEMENT.

(We don't print emojis, sorry, bro.)

Rick has now traded in his cahoonas to become DREAMWORKS' PUSS IN BOOTS. Please tell me he shows his strength vicariously through his "so called army". HAS RICK GONE SOFT? Talk to me man and write back this time bro lol.

DONT "PUSS" OUT LIKE RICK LOL.

GREAT WRITINGAS YOU CAN TELL HOW FAR YOU HAVE ME DRAWN IN

WAITING ON YOUR OUTCAST TV PREMIERE BTW
SIGNING OUT

FT. LAUDERDALE , FL
LEVI

Anyone whose writing echoes Zodiac Motherfucker is an automatic win. I've been thinking we don't really attract crazy anymore, but I like your style.

No comment.

So, Darth Negan has successfully turned Rick Deadwalker to the Dark Side and we're going to watch him turn into Darth Phillip. Cool. People have speculated Rick turning down the Governor path for years now, I didn't think it was going to happen, I thought his will and ideals were too strong. Really excited to see where this goes.

Ethan Tompkins

That's certainly one interpretation of events. I don't think it's accurate, but I'm just a fucking liar, let's move on.

Heh... this was a fun letters column.

See you in April. Don't forget the first episode of the Michonne game is out now. No lie!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, man! Telltale's MICHONNE game is out! The game that details her time away during and after the big time jump of issue 127? That sounds like something readers of this comic should get! Look for it... and then be back here in one month for the issue where we reveal Negan can now go invisible! Wow!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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While everyone worries about Negan swinging Lucille, they tend to take their eyes off the fact that Negan will also fucking stab you. It doesn't make as big of a splash as a bat, but he's killed more people on-panel with a knife than Lucille. So watch out, ESPECIALLY as he wanders into the territory of some folks that love their knives just as much as he does...

And if you're reading this on release day... have you recovered from Negan's big debut on the TV show?

Holy crap! This issue is shipping after the finale to season 6? Hah! Man, oh man... Jeffrey Dean Morgan, am I right?! Seeing that scene come to life is one of the great joys of my life. Enjoy the summer and your wait for the season 7 premiere.

Luckily, you have Fear The Walking Dead and now the Preacher TV show to hold you over until TWD comes back. So enjoy those shows on AMC.

But back to comics... it's just great having NEGAN back in action, right? And honestly... I know he's activated in the show now, too... that was such a coincidence. He was not released to coincide with his debut on the show... I honestly am incapable of that level of planning and coordination.

Let's answer some letters!

Dear Robert and friends,

Ahhh, after the frustrating issues of post-144, we get to see some action being taken. Brilliant writing, by the way. Most would see it as annoying but it made perfect sense because the reader feels like the community of Alexandria. I am guessing that was intentional.

So, now we know Michonne is going to lead the Kingdom. Maggie at the Hilltop. Rick at Alexandria. Yet, we still have trouble with The Saviors.

How are The Saviors? When we left them before the 2 year skip, Dwight was the one person who kept them together after Rick forced them to cease fire. Dwight called them back home. Now, Dwight is gone and we still really haven't seen how The Saviors are doing. I really would like to see more of them. They were the focus of an entire war and now they've become background. I mean, we know Dwight has kept them from doing anything bad, but other than that, we don't know what they do. How do they contribute? What do they even have to trade? Since the herd-leading group has taken over protection detail, the Saviors are just another small community of people. Except they don't

trust Rick like the others. How are they going to accept a leader arranged by Rick?

Sorry that it hasn't been more clear. But the Saviors do believe that Rick liberated them from Negan... for the most part. That's the general consensus. Negan wasn't the most fun leader to have after all. I do plan to spend a little more time with The Hilltop, The Sanctuary and Oceanside, the fishing community where Michonne stayed for so long... that is currently featured in Telltale's MICHONNE game (check it out!). I just haven't been able to spend a lot of time with them yet. But it's coming.

I enjoyed the opening putting the threat of walkers back in. It was needed. I also enjoyed seeing Gabriel again. And the conversation between Rick and Michonne helped identify leaderships and was nice.

Now, for the one everybody is gonna ask about. Please, please, please, PLEASE, do not let this be another Rick-phone thing or a red herring. It looked so amazing (you have somebody to thank for that amazing page) and so monumental that for it to be just another "cliffhanger" would destroy my soul. I really love Eugene and understand his grief is probably insane right now, but a Rick-phone or hallucination or anything other than something new would make me sad. Please, Mr. Kirkman.

It sure doesn't appear to be a psychotic breakdown, so far...

I would be the hackiest, hack who ever hacked if Eugene was hallucinating a person on the other end of the radio the same way Rick talking to Lori on the phone after she died. And that's not me being cute in a letters column trying to throw you off the scent. That's DEFINITELY not what's happening. Eugene is totally talking to a person. For real.

Lastly, I just was thinking about what direction you were going with the comics from here on out and this issue made me think some more. I feel like you are building towards something bigger than the Whisperers. We've seen our survivors emerge as leaders in the communities. Rick in ASZ, Maggie at the Hilltop, soon-to-be Michonne in the Kingdom, possibly somebody else for the Saviors. We also have this Oceanside place we know little about, and possibly another group found with Eugene's radio (again, PLEASE).

With all of this build-up, I feel as though one of two things are happening. Either you are showing us how the communities are uniting to fight one threat, or you are using this Whisperer plot solely to build up the military aspect for a bigger war. Are you possibly building up to a War of Communities? We've seen the wedge between Maggie and Rick swell and shrink for the past while, and we've seen

Michonne and Rick get closer and closer. Dwight seems more like a military leader, so that leaves the Saviors alone. But it would be absolutely amazing and terrifying to see the characters we love most fight against each other. I was just curious if a civil war was ever in your head?

THE WALKING DEAD: CIVIL WAR—Protect the future. Change the future.

Hey, I think you're onto something, Sean. We could have a character revealed who could see the future... and they could start telling Rick about bad things people are going to do. Rick could want to kill or maybe just stop those people before they do the crimes... but Andrea could argue, that NO... we can't punish someone for crimes they haven't yet committed... I think that'd be a GREAT idea for a story. Wait... hold on... that's just the plot of Minority Report... I'd never just crib that and turn it into a storyline... that's lazy.

If not, is there something bigger past the Whisperer storyline? Because, as scary as they seem, it almost seems manageable if they can manage to get enough ammunition and build a military. I'd feel kinda weird if you had the communities unite again to fight a common threat like Negan.

Plenty of cool stuff coming with the Whisperers, stay tuned.

P.S. Does Negan have a plan? At all? Or is he just there to be *ahem* the Devil on Rick's Shoulder?

Sincerely,

Colton Taff
Springfield, MO

Negan's plan, if any (that motherfucker is crazy)... will continue to unfold next issue.

Dear Rob and Sean

I'm addicted to the story, but I've started to really enjoy the character Dwight his whole presence is undeniably relatable who doesn't get afraid of that type of responsibility I really hope he's not a character to be getting killed off soon he has so much more potential that I can't wait to see flourish.

don'tkillDwight

Mike Bona from Ontario

Don't worry. We still have to kill off Andrea first.

Hey there,

I'm a huge Walking Dead fan (show and comic) but the comic comes first...obviously ;) Anywho, my question for you guys is that, do you think that Robert's other comic, "Outcast" will grow to the same popularity as TWD? As it already is doing well in sales and also has a tv show coming to Cinemax in 2016.

Thanks, Konrad Bruszcak
Beaverton, Oregon

Ok, we're cheating by fielding an OUTCAST question in TWD... but Konrad sent it to TWD (not OUTCAST), so... maybe not all of you know that Robert's new show OUTCAST (based on the comic from Image/Skybound, with the amazing art team of Paul Azaceta & Elizabeth Breitweiser) is debuting on Cinemax, June 3rd. The pilot just world premiered at SXSW in Austin, and if you're into TWD, I'd like to think you'll dig the horror in this show as well.

It's crazy good. The premiere is directed by Adam Wingard (Google him if you need to), starring Patrick Fugit, who is amazing. It's going to be a great show, I'm really excited. I'm actually writing this on the plane back from Austin and we just announced the show's already been picked up for season 2, even though we don't air the first season until June. Very cool.

So while I have no idea what level of success Outcast will reach, it's off to a very good start. You guys should all be reading that book!

Hello all,
Great book, best book ever. I always enjoy reading the letter hacks but I've found myself getting irritated with letters that are for 2 or 3 issues ago. It's like, something big happens in 151 with the CB radio, but then in that issue's letter hacks there's a guy saying the CB radio is useless. Or when people would say how much they love a character and you should never kill them, but then in that issue they die. It almost makes printing those letters pointless. But I know you guys publish these as quickly as you can, and printing anything closer to the issue that was just released is impossible. So my suggestion? I've noticed more people using Periscope or Going Live on Facebook to have a live Q&A. So I thought, wouldn't that be neat if they could do letter hacks live? Obviously you don't know when a reader is going to read the book, but you do know when it will be released, so you could host a live Q&A on one of those formats at a set time on the release day. Say an issue comes out on March 2nd, you could have live letter hacks at a set time that night, like 8pm Pacific time or whatever, just for about 15 minutes is really all you'd need to do. It'd give the loyal followers some incentive to buy and read the book on the day it came out (as if they/we didn't do that already) and we'd get a bonus live letter hacks. Hell, you could even do it while you're on the toilet, I won't care. I'm not sure if people can send you comments/questions on Periscope, I've never used it, but I know users can do that when someone is Live on Facebook.

-Watching you poop,
Tyler Okrzesik
Milwaukee, WI

You're right. We can't change the two-issue gap for letters. For instance, #152 came out last week, and we're printing #153 this week. And while a tremendous amount of mail came in already, we need to leave enough time for the folks who don't read it the first week. As for some online component... we've talked about

it. We obviously like the permanence of print and running the best/worst/weirdest letters here. It's worked for 150+ issues.

Some kind of online component like you mention would be very cool... but I think in addition to Letter Hacks, not instead of. Also, a 15 minute Periscope would only cover a few letters, really. My responses here at times can be much more involved than that. And while I can type these things on a plane or while I'm supposed to be paying attention in a writer's room... I can't do a Periscope video in those settings.

Just finished number 151 and wow, that was a really good issue. Kudos to you, but at the end when eugene heard the people on the radio, at first I thought that there were more people with power and radios out there, but then I got a little more pessimistic because the same thing happened with Rick and the phone. And the situations Eugene is in was basically the same as Rick after the prison fell. When the prison fell, Lori and the baby were killed, and just recently, in the walking dead world, Rosita was killed, with the unborn baby. So my theory is that it is just like the phone. But no-one will know until the next issue,

Regards,
Adam Itzla

Or next issue... Or maybe the issue after.

Not the case. Again... I promise. Man... I really never even considered the similarity between those two storylines. That's what happens when you write a book for friggin' FIFTEEN YEARS. Sigh.

Dear Walking Dead Crew

This email is a reply to Sean's answer about whether or not the people in the communities would concerned themselves with birth control methods. I think you're wrong on that. I guarantee you that at least every woman in that community has thought about it and how to prevent it. Heck, its one of the first things I think about when I think of life in the zombie apocalypse! The communities have had a few years of relative peace, and seeing as though sex is one of the most natural things you can do, I'm sure family planning and been addressed. I know you didnt mean to just lump everyone together but hey this is why people like Sheryl Sandberg write books like "Lean In," Female perspective just needs to be brought to the table in many discussion where it historically wasn't. I going to go ahead and say that the discussion of zombie apocalypse survival is one of them.

I didn't mean to discount birth control completely, just to suggest that survival was always the primary concern. Which shouldn't exclude the topic of new life, and the resources and effort needed to nurture and support the next generation. Glenn and Maggie certainly had talks about it... and bringing life into this world SHOULD be a big concern (just as it should be in real life).

Anywho, I do want to say though Sean, you are probably right about Carl and Lydia, in this particular case, young teens, passion of

the moment and, Lydia (and maybe even Carl) probably isn't even aware of the term 'birth control', then yeah I think its safe to say they were being reckless.

Love the comic, been reading since 2009 and will always be hooked!

Keep up the good work

Katharine M.
Baltimore, MD

Thanks for writing in, Katherine. SHAME ON YOU, SEAN!

Would a walker bite another walker if it's skin is still fresh enough? I'm also a huge fan and can't wait to see what you have coming!!! Keep up the good work!

Starwarsfan456

A dead body wouldn't become a walker until its body temperature had lowered enough that another walker wouldn't be tempted to bite it. It reaches a very dead corpse state before reanimation occurs. SCIENCE!

FAKE SCIENCE!

Dear Mr.Kirkman and The Walking Dead team, I just wanna say absolutely love the work you guys and gals produce...Huge Mondo Fan...But I have one question. ... Will Negan be receiving his own special like: Morgan, Tyreese, Michonne and The Governor?

Javier

I don't think we've talked about it in these pages, yet... but YES. Negan is getting his own origin special. Image is launching a new magazine, Image Plus, in conjunction with Diamond's Previews catalog, and each issue of the magazine will include 4 pages of "Here's Negan"... a serialized comic that will give you a good look at who Negan is, and how he got here.

His story will be running through the first 12 issues, and Image Plus will be the only place to read it for now. (It'll be collected eventually, after the story's finished.) So you can either buy Previews and get Image Plus free with it, or it's available for purchase by itself for \$1.99. There's all sorts of other cool content in there, with news on Image's latest releases, exclusive previews of new books, interviews with Image creators... it's pretty damn cool.

We're back next month with more Negan and more Whisperers and... well, you'll see. Enjoy the second season of FEAR THE WALKING DEAD until then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be great! Everything is great! It'll be great to see you all back here next month for a new issue! Great!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Negan and Alpha... will these two complete each other and leave all the murder behind? Or are we headed somewhere darker and nastier? Who am I kidding? It's always going somewhere dark and nasty with those two.

I'd put money on it... just saying. Darkness ahead? Safe bet. Always a safe bet.

I'm mostly talking about this letters column though. LET'S DIVE IN!

Ohhh Sean and Robert,

I felt like Lili Taylor in Say Anything at the climax of issue 152:

Kirkman lies.
(He lies... when he cries.)

I hope you sung that. I did and then I cried tears of fear and joy. Thanks for being a lying, twisted-fuck, Robert. Truly. I am so fucking excited in this moment.

Now let's fuck some beloved characters in a manner that they are not yet accustomed. I'm going to go stroke my Lucille replica and await the coming mayhem.

Fuck yes,
Carly Hudson

First time Say Anything has been quoted in Hacks, I bet. And yes, characters are already on their ways to being fucked, like Brandon (R.I.P.) and poor, poor Aaron.

Things are definitely starting to get exciting. I'm so glad everyone is so happy with how Negan has escaped.

I read somewhere that Robert Kirkman created Negan because he wasn't satisfied about a circumstance where Rick was forced to kill Glenn to save Carl.

What?!!?

Could you elaborate on the circumstance that would have been? I love Negan but seeing Rick kill one of his best friends sounds like a missed opportunity. Was it simply a case of someone forcing him to choose between Glenn and Carl or did he willingly do it against his better judgement?

Cheers,
AJ

Was this really a thing? I have never heard that story.

That is TRUE... but I can't for the life of me remember when I spoke about that publicly. The original plan was for Negan to force Rick to kill Glenn to save Carl. I couldn't figure out a clear way to make it work... and so I just changed it up. That's not WHY Negan was introduced, but I did, at some point during season 3 of the show, tell Andrew Lincoln that was coming up while we were in the car together... and he got very excited by just how brutal that was. But he's never asked me about it since... I think he forgot... actors... bah!

Dear TWD,

Surprisingly this is my first letter hack, because I'm a huge fan maybe too much of a fan as my friends and family think being I attend all conventions and collect everything lol anyway down to Business.

I read up to 152 the newest one, and I personally think the story is crazy I was flipping out in the car reading it as my dad turned to me and was questioning what was going on! I just love everything that's going on including the current

story arc. But honestly I'm so curious about why only one issue comes out per month and what the heck is gonna happen when the show is caught up to the comics because that's happening very quickly!?

This came up in a couple letters, and yeah, I can see how going from #75 to #100 in 8 episodes may cause some concern. But the show does double back on the comic from time to time, like presenting the Billy and Ben plot in a new way. Plus we're still 54 issues ahead... or really, 54 and a half since the cliffhanger interrupted the events of #100...

Yeah, look at it this way... it took us 6 seasons to get to 100. It won't take us 6 years to get to 200 and that will take us to season... TWELVE. And we'll STILL be ahead of the show by that point.

And if the show is still going strong at season 12... well, that would be about the most amazing thing ever... so we'll all be too busy celebrating to worry about anything.

Also what is going on in the kingdom being their leader has died!? We haven't seen much from them, unless you've officially made Michonne the leader as Rick mentioned a few issues back. Has Rick brought all the leaders into the fold about going to war? And why doesn't EVERYONE know they are training for war like father Gabriel? I don't know but I'm very curious hopefully you can supply us with some answers either in the letter hacks or the upcoming issues! Thanks guys at TWD & Skybound Keep on writing great and have a great day!
~ Anthony Burke, NewYork

Safe to say, we'll be getting to all of this.

Dear Robert, Sean, and whoever the fuck else reads this,

You guys have said that every new Walking Dead issue will come the first week of every month. Judging by how every comic mostly come out on Wednesday, according to my calculations that took 2 hours, The 500th issue of TWD will come out on March 1, 2045. On that day, Robert will be 66 years old. Please tell me that my calculations are right and I haven't spent 2 hours for nothing. In that case, fuck you!

With Enraged Love,
Nick Loughlin

PS Loved issue 152! Hope Rick fucking kills that piece of white trash!

I've always heard #300 being the target, so you can take almost 17 years off your estimate lickety split. And throw in some double shipping... man, you're way off.

I'm going to have a nervous breakdown if I spend any more time thinking about the year 2045...

Dear TWD

Just read issue 152 and it was GREAT! That ending though! I can feel it will end up just like issue 140, when you teased that Negan could have escaped, while he actually valued Rick's trust too much to try running away. Anyway, I was reading 152's letter hacks, and I saw you guys discussing the issues of Carl having sex. And that is what made me think of further questions. Like: "is safe sex even a thing? after the apocalypse and all". And that made me think, like, how many wives did Negan have? He mustn't have been using contraceptives all the time. Most importantly, that brings the question: is it really possible that after a long while having so many wives, none of them ever was pregnant? Is there a Negan Jr on the way somewhere? Could he have the same baseball skills of his father? And the same fetish for cursing all the time? So many important questions!

Thanks for bringing us these awesome comics!
Francisco,
Quebec, Canada

Of course it's possible. You're assuming Negan exclusively engages in vaginal sex and doesn't pull out... I feel like I'm already pushing the line, so let's say there is a plethora of ways to keep him pleased and limit risk of pregnancy. (Though if Robert suddenly revealed there was an army of badass two-year-olds with widow's peaks and mini bats, I wouldn't be unhappy.)

I don't think anyone wants to venture into the dark and murky waters of what Negan is into sexually...

Dear TWD team,
I was just wondering if you plan on making any more character issues. Say for Negan, Dwight and Jesus (hint hint). I would really like to see a couple more. That is really all I wanted to ask. I'm very excited to see who's on the other end of Eugene's radio call.
Thanks,
Ashley B.
Western PA

I'll mention this again, but Negan's origin is being serialized in Image Plus magazine OUT NOW. Every month a 4-page installment will be included (as well as all sorts of other cool Image Comics content). It's only \$2, or comes free with purchase of Diamond's Previews catalog. Charlie's having a blast penciling and inking it; turns out Negan is one of his favorite characters to draw.

I enjoy writing him as well. It's a lot of fun, I hope you guy's dig it!

In issue 108 Jesus tells Rick that there are other smaller communities besides Alexandria, the Hilltop, the Kingdom and Sanctuary. Were these people under Negan's rule? Have they been contacted by Rick during the 2 year jump?

Greetings from Buenos Aires, Argentina
Juan

We actually discussed this very recently, and maybe you'll find out eventually, and maybe you won't?

Oceanside was one of those communities, and as I see it, Jesus observed them, but maybe they weren't brought into the network of communities until between 126 and 127. The others... you'll just have to see.

Kirkman,

I've been reading since about issue 55, and have been watching the show since it first aired. I love it all. But seriously, what the fucking fuck? That has to be the absolute lamest, most un-fucking-necessary, cheap-ass, cliff-hanger season ending to any show ever. I can only imagine how differently I would have received issue 100 if you had ended it like that. When issue 100 was published I exclaimed through my personal window to the internet (Facebook) that 'The Walking Dead' is the best book I've ever read, and I've read shit like 'The Great Gatsby,' 'Crime and Punishment,' 'The Jungle'. If you had ended it with a black panel and "He's taking it like a champ" I would have been fucking pissed. The issue would have been ruined.

This season was ruined. You don't need gratuitous cliff hangers to bring us back next season, man! We love this show (obviously). It fucking sells itself.

Keep writing this wonderful comic, but maybe you ought to let the show writing go. Or maybe you already have and maybe that's why it sucked shit this weekend.

love <3

Steve Ayres

The Great Gatsby?! BAH! ;-)

After years of reading this tale, I've learned to trust and respect Robert Kirkman. He has created a believable world by following a vision, trusting his story, and trusting us to bring what we need to the telling. It's a productive relationship and I enjoy every issue. I've been watching the show as well, and love the way the story is kept fresh and powerful for all viewers. But, it seems, there are others

involved. A network, for one. Sponsors. Whoever. The finale's 6th season ending totally disrespected the viewers. We need that much of a hook to get us back? Seriously? It pisses me off. The show will be available on disk at my library. The cliffhanger will be resolved on twitter moments after who is hanging over the cliff is revealed. For me, I'll continue with the books. Pure, unadulterated Kirkman. Thanks, Robert Kirkman and friends, for the pleasure your book gives me every month.

-d.

Thank you for reading... sorry you didn't like the finale.

Hey ya'll. I started reading the comics about 2 years ago (should note that this is the first comic series I have ever gotten into). Finally finished 152 and I have to say, I could not help but crack up laughing over the ending. Hahaha. I want to thank you Robert, for creating this world for all of us, which makes me absolutely insane at times. I am madly obsessed with both the comic and the show. Speaking of the show, I had to read 100 again after that CRAZY cliffhanger this season. Definitely waiting to see how it all plays out in October.

Bring on the shenanigans! I cannot wait to see what happens in the next issue.

Sincerely,
Kelli A.
Colorado Springs, CO

I like your positivity, Kelli.

Okay, the season 6 finale has certainly caused a fervor online. EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT IT. Some people love it. Some people are indifferent. Some people HATE it. We weren't trying to game the audience, we weren't trying to drive you crazy, and we certainly weren't trying to FORCE you to come back for season 7... we hope you were always planning on doing that and still plan on doing that.

We did want you to talk. And talk you are.

The speculation, the frustration, the possibilities, the theories... honestly, in my mind... that stuff is FUN. I honestly feel like that's something fun for the fans to do during the break. Was it Spencer? Could it have been Morgan? What about Carol? Did Negan kill Jesus?! (Note, none of them were there... I'm not giving ANYTHING away.) I know people are angry over this, but that wasn't our intent. The idea was that after 6 seasons of a show, we wanted to stay on your mind and give you something to talk about.

And think of it this way... a character you love and are going to miss is DEAD, and we gave you a few extra months to hope, to not grieve. Is there uncertainty? Yes. But that was kind of the idea.

But seriously. Everyone on the TWD team wanted to do something cool. We wanted to do something different and we did it to change things up, get people excited and keep this show on your mind.

For some of you, that effort backfired and you're angry. And for that I'm sorry. The only thing I can PROMISE you is that the season 7 premiere is going to be awesome. And when viewed as a two-part episode (the same way EVERY SEASON of Star Trek: The Next Generation ended with the first half of a two-part episode that was a cliffhanger...), it's going to be a pretty awesome ride. And every minute of the season 6 finale was important and was setting something up that you probably won't see coming.

It's a cool episode... and remember... there's a LOT more for Negan to do. Be afraid... be very afraid. And excited!

Next month, Negan and Alpha have a first date. Not really, but as close as they're ever going to get to one, I suppose. And check out the Jupiter's Legacy flip book preview by Mark Millar & Frank Quitely... Two of the best to have ever done it! Demand it from your retailer!

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be awesome! See you soon!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

You've all sensed this was coming, and by now we've announced THE WHISPERER WAR arc starting in #157. But I can guarantee you, everything about this upcoming story will feel different from "All Out War." You'll see...

Yeah, the similarities there end with the word "WAR" in the title. That and it will be another big storyline people talk about for a good long time. Big stuff on the horizon, as you can tell from the end of this issue.

Wee! Onto the letters!

Negan's fuckin' BACK, baby!!!! Burn it all down man, burn it all down!!!!!!

Tony

WE'RE COMING IN HOT THIS MONTH!!!!

Dear TWD Crew,

When I look back, I was so sure that Rick was going to kill Negan at the end of All Out War. That's just what was supposed to happen. But now, after reading issue 153 I am soooooooo glad that did not happen! Because now the extreme awesomeness that is NEGAN lives on! I am so freakin' excited and can't wait to see what he does next!

Thanks guys!

Beca from Houston

See! If Rick had killed Negan in AOW, then all sorts of fun, interesting, crazy shit wouldn't have happened. Robert knows what he's doing sometimes.

Sometimes...

I'm a new reader to the comics (inhaled all of them in about a week) and a show watcher since day one.

This is going back to Katherine M. 's letter in Letter Hacks, back of issue #153 about pregnancy. Now, I may be getting the show and the comic mixed up, (be kind to the newbie lol) but if everyone is already infected (Julie reanimated after her suicide pact /comic, Jenner spills the beans to Rick in the CDC episode) and will turn upon death, if a woman miscarries, wouldn't that baby turn into a fetal "walker"? Wouldn't the little "beans" just gum their way out, killing the mother in the process? I can't imagine anyone wanting to get pregnant in the zombie apocalypse.

Btw, this is the first comic series I've ever read and I'm lovin'it! Thanks for opening the door to a whole new world for me! HOOKED!

Laurie

This question was raised on Fear TWD this season, and hypothetically yes, if the fetuses had the strength to do so. Which they don't. Even a baby walker must be pretty wimpy. So the mother would probably have a lot of discomfort before her body caught on and miscarried.

Yeah, babies in the womb do pretty much what a zombie baby in the womb would do. They kick, they move around... mindlessly... they use all their strength. It's not like a human baby is careful inside there... and if it were a zombie, it would cut loose. Zombie baby in the womb? Not dangerous at all.

Dear Robert, Sean and The Walking Dead team,

Let me start off by saying that this is the only graphic novel I've ever read. I think it is amazing: solid storylines, interesting and dynamic characters, adequate pacing, and and an on-point art-style (kudos to Charlie!).

Adequate?

I wanted to let you know, I've enjoyed Magna's group's presence so far. Even if they haven't been central to the story, we found A New Beginning through their eyes, and they still have cameos; that's okay in my book. Knowing how this works, they're probably essential on the issue that this letter is being published...

Magna is the new Father Gabriel.

We'll be seeing more of them soon. Sorry, there's a lot going on in the books and sometimes characters just drop out for a while. They're part of Dwight's crew and will have a lot to do, if say... a war were to suddenly break out.

By the way, I also like that we met Siddiq on Telltale's Michonne Miniseries. Would you mind providing a bit more clarity on how the timelines connect?

Telltale's Michonne series occurs in the time gap before #127. Siddiq was already part of Pete's crew before Michonne joined it. Michonne later points him in the direction of Alexandria, once he's done with the seafaring life, while she stays onboard until we see her again in #139. Also, all three parts of the Michonne series are now available to play.

I'm looking forward to reading how the Whisperers storyline resolves. Up to this point, it's been really creeping me out, in the same way that the "Woodbury" sign that Rick, Glenn and Michonne encountered did. Keep up the great job!

BetterToSleep,
Santiago, Chile

We'll do our best!

Hello Kirkman et al.

I have the notion where this is going. And I can promise you, that if Alpha kills Negan, i'm going to find everyone of you and forcefully insert random assorted stuff into your rectums. Dont make any mistake, I want Negan dead, but he deserves to die an horrible death by the hands of any of the survivors, Rick, Carl, Michonne or Maggie. Don't make him die by the hands of a weakling whisperer or their leader.

Ricardo

If next issue's cover is to be believed, Negan and Alpha are about to do some smooching. Not enough smooching pre-wartime!

The relationship forming between Alpha and Negan is a big part of the war on the horizon. Stay tuned!

Dear Walking Dead Brain Trust,

I've been reading the comic for many years, but it was only after seeing Rick and Michonne together on the TV show that the thought occurred to me: wouldn't people be hesitant to sleep in the same bed? Assuming that most people at this point in either the comics or the TV show know that everyone turns regardless of how they die (absent puncturing the brain, of course), wouldn't sleeping next to someone who could die suddenly in their sleep (i.e., with no previous warning signs) constitute a huge risk? In the Walking Dead world, spooning is super dangerous.

Alone in a room,
Rene P.,
San Diego, CA

Not a bad point. Though dying in your sleep would be a luxury, so why not do it with someone you love? (Michonne's got to be the big spoon, right?)

TWD team,

I hate when comics have typos. So much work goes into them that I find it totally absurd when things slip through. How many people review a comic before it goes to print? (Seriously, I'm curious.)

This feels self-indulgent, but isn't that what letters pages are about? When an issue is lettered we send it to our proofers (including Skybound and Image employees, as well as trusted creators). There's probably 40 people on that list, and about five are ace proofreaders.

Nothing pulls me out of the story more than a typo. I've never written in to a comic before but I had to just to tell y'all that you're awesome for not having typos! There may have been a few but I've forgotten about them after realizing how typo-free the last like 70 issues have been. Well, there are typos in the responses in Letter Hacks but one can only ask for so much.

Keep it up,
Allison Mac
Lakewood, WA

P.S. How embarrassing would it be if I made a typo up there?

Well, I've been onboard for the past 53 issues, so... fuck those other guys, right? Typos are extremely rare, but continuity errors... oof. Those slip through on occasion.

Shhhhhhh.

Dear Kirkman and Crew,

Today I bought my first stand-alone comic ever in issue 153 of TWD, and honestly I couldn't be happier with it. I only just got caught up with the book (after I read a bunch of them online--I am a broke and impatient college student who couldn't wait to save for the TPB's, sorry, but I'll buy them from now on) but I love it so much and it's making me want to start reading other ones too now (destined to make me an even more broke college student, but it'll probably be worth it).

My question is, are there any mixed race characters in the book as of right now? I know there's a wide amount of diversity in general and I appreciate it a lot, but as someone who is half black/half white, it would be cool to see if there was someone similar. I thought Laura might have been at one point, but her Wiki page disagrees which is unfortunate.

Laura is Latina. And the most prominent mixed race character is Maggie's son, Hershel.

Also don't kill Negan. He's my favorite (along with Jesus and Michonne) and genuinely one of the best written bad guys I've seen in a long time. Don't mess that up! There's gotta be plenty more room for him killing people for the fun of it (I'm so glad he killed Brandon by the way, that kid was awful), and I want to see him interact with Carl again.

Keep up the good work,

Keilah, UK

P.S. If you could tell Charlie that his artwork is beautiful as always, that would be swell.

Charlie loves compliments. I hope you're reading this, Charlie!

He's just skimming for his name, so he definitely read this! Charlie, you're the best!

The fucking best!

A whole lot of Negan and Alpha next issue. It's a big one, for sure.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Is that some kind of hint? What are you getting at, Sean?

-Robert Kirkman

And hey, check out this preview of the newest Skybound series, HORIZON, by Brandon Thomas, Juan Gedeon and Frank Martin. For those of you who dig the survival elements of TWD, in HORIZON we show you that survival isn't just a human instinct. So meet Zhia Malen, Earth's new worst enemy. In stores July 13th! Pre-order with your local retailer.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Shit... SHIT. SHIIIIIIIT. From the letters we received for #154, you all thought this Negan/Alpha thing was going the distance... but it didn't even reach first base.

Yeah, sorry to mislead you (and credit where credit is due, some of you guessed this wasn't a love connection), but Negan had other plans. Exciting times ahead.

Re. Aaron's perforated gut from the altercation with Frowny McTwoknives.

Response: WHAT THE FUCK???? Not AARON! NONONONONONONO! N.O.I.

Most sincerely yours,

B. Hawkes
Nova Scotia, Canada
(the province that currently ISN'T on fire)

Postscript:
Seriously. Don't kill Aaron. Please don't. Okay? Please?

I'm a little surprised at all the LOVE for Aaron this month. Not because I don't like Aaron (I do), but where have you been every other month? Seriously, folks, don't wait until we kill your favorite character to write in. Let us know just how much you love them now, so we can figure out how best to hurt you. Ok?

Yes, that would be very helpful.

The stuff between Jesus and Alex... Jesus isn't playing him! Maybe it looks like that to Aaron but Jesus made it clear to Alex in that letter in 136 that he cared about Alex. Alex has Wes now and he moved on. It's over. There was no need to portray Jesus as being some -typical horny gay gay- the media portrays. Jesus was such a great representation and you kicked him down.

"Jesus Monroe"

I think Aaron seeing him that way and him actually being that way are two different things. Stay tuned.

Dear Robert, Sean, and whoever the fuck else reads this,

Where the fuck is Heath? Not complaining, just asking.

With Enraged Love,
Nick Loughlin
Northborough, Massachusetts

On page 1, panel 1, next issue.

Yeah, sorry... he's been around, but there's been so much other stuff going on lately. We'll see more of him during The Whisperer War.

Hello to my favorite writer of all time. Sorry J.K.R. You've been replaced.

So Rob, after reading issue #154, which was INCREDIBLE... something dawned on me. How the fuck old is Negan? He looks exactly the same when he was first introduced in issue #100, my favorite issue of ALL TIME, whereas Rick looks like he's aged 20 years. I figured living in a tiny cell for years would age person or is Negan that fucking mentally tough?

Whatever the case, he's one special fucker! I hope to fucking Hades we get to explore the fuck out of Negan and

his background especially since he seems enamored with Alpha. Love always brings about self reflection and I'm hoping we get a glimpse of who he used to be.

Keep lying to us,
Tisha M.
Murrieta, California

If you want a glimpse of who Negan used to be, check out the "Here's Negan" story in IMAGE PLUS magazine. It's monthly, available in comic book stores.

Rick hasn't aged 20 years! He's just got a different hair style... and he's got a cane! Young men can have canes!

"THUMBER"????

Darryl

Yeah, I didn't know what it was either. Now I do.

Sean, I feel like you're protesting a bit too much.

Kirkman and company,

As usual, another great issue from you and the TWD team. Now for a couple questions:

1) So will Alpha be getting some Delta from Negan? (see what I did there with the military phonetic alphabet....Delta for D...like Dick?)

Head. That's all she's getting from him. HEAD. Yep, let's just sweep that dusty old "joke" off the table so no one else is tempted.

2) After watching how playing on a radio got everything all dicked up in FTWD, what are the odds the Eugene will do the same with his radio?

OK...that was all. Great work as usual! Can't wait till next month. This being caught up sucks.

Chris Crossont
Baltimore, MD

I assure you FTWD has in no way spoiled our radio plot with Eugene. We'll be going in a different path.

MAN OH MAN. "The Whisperer War" kicks off next month. We're doing really cool stuff this arc, both art and story wise, so can't wait to share it with you in August. Comics legend Arthur Adams is contributing connecting covers, so if you like things that connect to make one insanely cool image, check those out.

Also, flip this book over to check out a preview of Sean Phillips, Ed Brubaker and Elizabeth Breitweiser's new book, Kill or Be Killed. If you've already read The Fade Out or Fatale or Criminal or Sleeper, you know to expect great comics.

AND WE HAVE SAN DIEGO COMIC CON IN A COUPLE WEEKS. SEE YOU THERE, HOPEFULLY! BYEEEEEEEEEE!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Comic-Con is in a couple weeks?! I'm not ready! I'm not ready! AGGGGGH! Read Kill Or Be Killed... it's awesome. You're going to love it!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

So you may have noticed this issue looked a little different. Or maybe it took you five extra minutes to read it. Robert and Charlie are packing so much into this arc, they're using a 16-panel grid, so the storytelling is more dense and action-packed. Everyone featured on this last page will have drastically different lives five issues from now. If they're still living...

Yeah, I love 16-panel grid comics. My Irredeemable Ant-Man series at Marvel was based on a 16-panel grid, and I've done random issues of other series, like INVINCIBLE, in this style before. It's a lot of extra work (for everyone involved, least of all me), but I think it's really cool and is a great way to do a manageably dense issue. I think it started with DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, but I'm sure that's probably just the most well known example. For those who don't know, or haven't noticed... it doesn't mean each page has 16 panels (like that awesome page to the left there), but each page is designed on the grid, and larger panels are made by combining multiple panels on the grid into larger panels.

COMICS! I LOVE COMICS!

I think this issue ships after Comic-Con... yeah, that's right. So... should we talk about EZEKIEL AND SHIVA--from that Season 7 Comic-Con trailer?! It's not enough that you get NEGAN, episode after episode, we're also bringing in Ezekiel and his tiger! And how great does Khary Payton look?! He's going to be great! It's going to be an awesome season! Buckle up for October!

Now let's answer some letters!

Dear Robert and Sean,

I just finished reading issue 155, great issue. I really love the how Negan is flirting with Alpha. The next piece is about the whole Aaron thing, really hoping he is still alive and well, but it's not looking so good for him, I'm guessing whatever issue this shows up in, his fate will already be determined.

Still alive this issue, but wait til next issue. Oh boy...

Also, a question about Negan falling in love with alpha at the end of issue 154. In the second chapter of here's negan in the image+ magazine, his wife gets cancer, now it hasn't shown this yet, but from a cancer standpoint, I know the chemotherapy usually makes the person lose hair so my question is, did Negan fall in love with Alpha because she reminded him of his wife?

Thanks for everything,
Paul from Maine

No, he did not. As you can tell from the previous issue... it was all a ruse to help Negan get close enough to... you know... cut her head off.

At the end of #154, I thought for sure that Aaron would be joining the ranks of fictional characters victim to the "Bury Your Gays" trope. Not that I think gay characters deserve special immunity in the zombie apocalypse or anything, but it was disappointing nevertheless (especially so soon after Denise's death in the show!).

That being said, I was thrilled that there was a glimmer of hope for Aaron's survival in #155. This way I can keep shipping him with Jesus for at least another month (as well as shipping the TV version of him with Daryl at least until the Season 7 premiere...)

Scott Erickson
Olympia, WA

If this issue is any indication, ship away! I'm pleasantly surprised with how invested our readers are in Jesus and Aaron's blossoming maybe-more-than-friendship. Then again, wait til next issue. Oh boy...

Robert,

I thought it was awesome you decided to show Dwight taking out walker Brandon, I was hoping we'd see the little prick again as a zombie! I also noticed that Dwight is carrying around Lucille everywhere with him. Will you be touching on that subject soon? Possibly a showdown with Dwight and Negan in the Whisperer War? I know you can only do so much in one episode and with so much going on right now it'll be rewarding to see it all play out! Great writing and superb artwork by Charlie! Don't fuck it up!

Brad M.

You got a "showdown" between Negan and Dwight IN THIS ISSUE!! How's that for service?

"fuck me until your dick breaks off inside me and fuses into some kind of barbie doll crotch"

I would just like to know how and why Mr Kirkman thought of this? I spent a good 10 minutes just staring at my wall after reading this one line thinking, "why?"

Anyway aside from the worst thing Negan has ever said in the entire series, I'm loving this new arc and can't wait to see what happens next!

(also Aaron better be alive goddammit)

Tobi

I wracked my brain and have to agree that line may have been the most Negan thing he's ever said.

If you've never desired to make love to someone so much that you find the idea of your anatomy breaking off inside of them and fusing into a part of them forever appealing... you've never truly been in love.

Robert,

I've been reading TWD since the very beginning. I've even had letters appear in the letter column while the book was in the 50's and other times after that. What I would like to ask is don't you have any story ideas besides all out war. I mean, the book jumps from one war to the other. Even your other comics have an overabundance of war. Invincible goes from one war to another. There are so many new ideas you could explore. It's just a little dull when you go from rinse to repeat. Also, each war arc gets longer than the one before.

I thought by now the zombies would be walking skeletons. I don't know how the flesh is not rotting off. I wish you would send a search party out to explore the rest of the country and maybe even look for answers on how the zombie virus started. It could even be a spin off. That would be extremely interesting.

OK, c ya!

Jeffrey
Mobile, AL

The Whisperer War couldn't be more different than All-Out War... and also, it's half the length of All-Out War! So you're totally wrong. Also, my god, it's been THREE YEARS since All-Out War. With INVINCIBLE, it's more or less a gag, because superhero comics always have a "WAR" based storyline going on at all times somewhere. Invincible War was a one-issue thing. That book could actually use far more wars.

Anyway, I promise you'll enjoy this storyline. It's going to be great.

Dear Robert and Sean,

Real quick, I was just wondering if you were planning to do any variants for the upcoming whisperer war? There were a couple of variants a few months ago for issue 150, and I'm gonna go out on a limb and say that the whisperer war is gonna be a lot bigger than issue 150-betrayed. So any new variants coming?

(PS The Whisperer War is gonna be YUUUGE)

Thanks, Paul from Maine

We have one of my favorite artists of all-time, Arthur Adams, doing variants for every issue of this arc. Nathan Fairbairn is coloring them. Even better, they all connect to form one badass piece. That would probably make a badass poster, right?

Why yes it would! We need to get on that. Arthur Adams poster! Personally, I think variants are best when used sparingly, otherwise they're not special. So while the floodgates have obviously been opened a few times on this series, there have been many and some lengthy dry spells

where we haven't done any variants. But for this arc, I thought it would be cool to have a massive interconnecting piece to celebrate this huge storyline. Arthur really delivered!

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Mackiewicz,

First off, thank you so much for this awesome series. I started out exclusively as a fan of the TV show, then after the ill-fated Season 6 finale cliffhanger, I decided to dive into the deep end of the pool and explore the comics (you can completely blame/thank Negan for this, by the way, because I did it after deciding 10 minutes of him wasn't enough for my satisfaction). I'd never read comics before, but quickly consumed all three compendiums plus the 10+ single issues to catch up to current in about 1.5 months time. Now, I've hit The Wall™ everyone else has in waiting a month for more Walking Dead, haha.

The season 6 cliffhanger plan worked!!

So, thank you for Negan. He's an absolutely fascinating antagonist and my favorite character. I hope that Magnificent Bastard lives forever, which, of course, probably means the issue my letter gets printed in will be the one in which he dies some sort of horrible death and I'm left just as sobbing and useless as the day Severus Snape died.

Moving on from that crappy scenario, I do have three random thoughts:

1. In Issue #154 Letter Hacks, someone wrote in wondering how, with all those wives Negan was banging all the time, there weren't a bunch of mini-Negans running around yet. In addition to all the logical points you both pointed out, nobody seems to also think of the possibility that maybe Negan is "ahem" *shooting blanks". Not that I'd suggest as such to his face, mind you.

Please don't?

2. Thank you SO MUCH for giving us the "Here's Negan!" backstory. I literally subscribed to Image+ just for that. Now that we know Negan once worked for a school and also was a coach there pre-Zombie Apocalypse, it makes me wonder about something. You know how schools have logos/mascots, right, like The Eagles, The Bears, The Warriors, etc? I wonder if his school was The Saviors and Negan named his badass end-of-the-world crew after the freaking school team he used to coach?

He did not.

3. Negan has a point: what did he do that was so wrong? I mean this in the context of The Saviors themselves when it's mentioned that they feel Rick liberated them from him. Now, yeah, I get that the fellows whose girls left them to become Negan's wives would feel some type of way, but otherwise... what, exactly, did John Doe Savior or Jane Doe Savior have against him as a leader? The iron punishment seems to have only ever been used to mark the guys who slept with his wives (all two of them, Mark and Dwight) or else there'd be a bunch more random Saviors running around with half a face. So, how exactly was Negan viewed as so awful by the rest of the random Savior folks? I feel like I missed something when reading the comics when it comes to that. Maybe he wasn't the nicest guy, yeah, but he also kept 70+ people alive, protected, clothed, fed, watered, etc. Considering all the crap going down in the world of The Walking Dead, that's not exactly awful. I get that the communities he bullied supplies from would feel liberated, but just confused why his own people would feel that way, too.

Once again, thanks for this awesome series plus the new "Here's Negan!" backstory. Looking forward to seeing how things play out with Negan now as a wildcard (as much as I fear for the big lug possibly getting in over his head).

Thank you kindly,
Tiffany Lowe
St. Augustine, Florida

Ok, so there's no debating why other communities perceive Negan as, at best, an unstable psychopath who can't be trusted. Sure, as a Savior you're protected and surviving, but there's no community. Every person just wants to make sure Negan's happy, and to do that you have to look out for yourself. A culture that also encourages you to profit and exploit any new community it faces. So yeah, you're safe, but would you honestly feel it's a group you'd die for?

Yeah, the basic idea is that most of them weren't exactly into Negan's tactics and behavior, but we'll be seeing in upcoming issues there's much more to it than that... so stay tuned. There's a lot brewing over in the Saviors' camp.

I have really enjoyed both the comics and the show. Now the comics, in the aftermath of All Out War, have taken this genre in a great new direction. Too many other stories have been written about surviving the zombie apocalypse, but now TWD has moved into such fresh ground of how to Live, not just survive, in the apocalypse. The world-building in all its details is great.

In terms of world-building it would be so great if Eugene's radio contact plays out into a significant story arc with a much larger community/organization (say a group of military/government

coming out of their survival bunkers after years tucked away safe, thinking they are the absolute law but totally naive to the world at the same time). But please god, don't make this another friggin' Rick's psycho phone red herring.

I believe we already said this is not the case... but if you believed that shit.... Oh boy...

Definitely not the case. And this isn't one of those times I lie in the letters columns to preserve story details.

In the Letter Hacks of issue #155 in reply to a zombie fetus, you stated "not dangerous at all". Based on your world-building this theory would be completely wrong, sorry. You've made a world where the slightest contact with the walker infection would turn anybody. The issue of being bitten by a walker is that the teeth are able to puncture the skin and allow the "infection" to enter the body fluids. Hence why Negan could coat his weapons with the dead and it had the same effect. So, with a miscarried fetus, even if for some reason you think the fluid exchange in the umbilical cord would suddenly stop, the amniotic fluid still passes through the placenta. The baby zombie's saliva will certainly infect the mother's tissue; no need for teeth to create a puncture in the skin to do so. Based on your TWD world, simply put, a miscarried fetus would always turn the mother.

Of course this opens a huge can of worms of how exactly the "infection" turns someone. If someone's brain is killed they don't turn, so their body can't infect others the way Negan used it for (and why the Hunters could safely eat people). But a walker does turn people. Hence, based on your world-building it is the brain that must actually release/activate/create something upon death that is released into the body to make the walker's tissue infectious. Imagine a bad guy who found a way to trigger this effect in the brain of others. Maybe this was the government ultimate tactical weapon that got out of hand in the first place? (a great weapon of war - destroy a population without any loss on your side and the retention of all their resources).

Keep it up, and please don't screw it up,

Mike

Don't make this more complicated than it already is!

Dear Robert, Sean, Charlie, and the rest of the wicked TWD Team,

Hi! I've been a fan for a relatively short time (a year or so) and have absolutely loved every page of the comics thus far. That aside, my reason for this submission is to ask questions about SCIENCE! FAKE SCIENCE!

We're great/not so great at FAKE SCIENCE!

1: If a roamer was to bite a small part of one's body (say, a finger, toe, or ear) clean off, with no snags or anything, would the person turn, or would they have to cut off a larger part in order to keep the infection at bay?

Yeah, they'd still turn.

2: If someone was to run a large amount of electricity through the brain of a roamer, would that fry its brain and thus kill the roamer? I thought of this idea when attempting to find ways that Rick could fend off Alpha's herd in the upcoming 'Whisperer War'

A large enough current, sure, that would fry those brains right inside the skull. Hence, our nation's most iconic form of capital punishment.

3: I know this is extremely unlikely, but would it be possible to kill a roamer by instantly freezing its head, and thus brain, with liquid nitrogen or something?

Possibly. At a low enough temperature, ice crystals would form, rupture the brain and turn it to mush. That took me 10 seconds to Google and no seconds at all to assume it's true. I haven't studied science since high school, by the way.

I realize that these are probably situations that you've never thought of, but if this gets into Letter Hacks, thank you for humoring my curiosity.

Best,
Quinn Connelly
Pittsburgh, PA

This kind of stuff is always fun to answer. Thanks for writing in, Quinn!

See you next month, for Part 2 of "The Whisperer War." Death comes early and often.

(And check out this preview of Skybound's latest series, DEMONIC!)

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's going to be awesome! See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

RIP Gabriel. That may have been one of the most unpleasant deaths in a while.

So, hands up if you were awaiting Negan and Frowny McTwoKnives to face off. Two heavy hitters... who look to be facing off next issue. I'm not saying it's going to happen... but it'd be cool if it did.

Cool indeed. Letters!

Hi Robert, Sean, Charlie and any others over there at Skybound!

Let me start off by saying I'm a huge fan of the comic. I started off watching the show after insistence from my friends that it was really good. After I started season 4, they tried to get me to read the comic, once again adamant that it was really good. They were right. Since then, I've been obsessed with both along with the Telltale games, which are magnificent, I must admit.

I've spent the last couple of weeks mulling over the end of Issue 156. I'm usually on board with the many happenings of the comic, no matter how horrid. Even the massacre at the end of 144 worked towards the story and cemented Alpha as the main antagonist. However, after reading of Alpha's death at the hands of Negan, I'm actually quite conflicted.

Negan is probably my favourite character in the comic for a slew of reasons but that ending was something that did not sit right with me. I'm going to predict right now that I'm in the minority when I say I was really starting to like Alpha. She was just coming into her own as a villain and a layered character.

I personally think it was the wrong move to kill her off in such a way and so early in her arc but at the end of the day, I have no doubt you have a spectacular story ahead. Alpha will be sorely missed by myself and if Beta thinks he can fill her shoes, he can play tongue-twister with Lucille. Anyway, thanks for such an awesome series and here's to many more years of fantastic writing!

Richard
Ireland

In a lot of ways, killing Alpha was one of the hardest deaths ever. I was considering how to not do it all the way up to writing the final scene. I was very conflicted on this... for a vast number of reasons. In the end, I just went with it. Oftentimes, I can feel the characters pulling the story in certain directions, and when that happens, I feel like I kind of have to go for it. That's pretty much what happened here. Basically, what I'm saying is I feel your pain, I miss her, too.

I'm a fourteen year old teenage girl and I've been reading these comics since I was twelve. My little sister reads them too. I am a die hard fan of the walking dead but I think y'all are responsible for my insanity.

LORD OH LORD. What even. Right now, watching NEGAN SASS ALPHA AND THEN DECAPITATE HER? This had me wheezing. I am so excited to see what happens. If Negan and Rick join forces and go against Beta I will lose my mind (to a more insane degree to what I am now).

Kiss goodbye to your fourteen-year-old mind! (Or just don't pick up next issue. The choice is yours.)

This comic series makes me a little less mad about the fact that I still don't know which one of my fam got the bat in the tv show.

Anyways, love ya work!
Jolie A
Sydney, Australia

You're just going to have to tune in to the season 7 premiere on October 23rd! Look on the bright side! The wait is almost over.

Hey guys,

Long time fan but this is the first time I'm writing to you. Haven't been with you guys since the beginning but this book was definitely one of the first comic books I had ever read and every issue since then has been amazing. Okay I'd be lying if I said there weren't a few "eh" issues every now and then.

The one with the aliens, right? Real divisive issue.

Y'know, one man's "eh" issue is another man's "wow" issue...

So let's get down to business. Sean mentioned in #156's Letter Hacks to notify you beforehand which characters it's okay to kill off and which characters are off limits.

Killables: Annie, Siddiq, Marco, Gabriel, Heath, Kelly, Connie, Olivia, Earl Sutton, Vincent, zombie Brandon, Lydia (because I have a feeling she's a spy). That's all I can think of for now.

Un-fucking-touchables: Carl (duh), Michonne, Aaron, Jesus, Negan, Dwight, Rick, Maggie, Andrea, Herchel (Jr.), Dante, Eugene, Laura. These will do for now.

Cute list.

Please don't kill the un-fucking-touchables.

Heh.

QUESTIONS.

1) Will Stephanie and her group be involved in the coming war?

You'll just have to stay tuned.

2) Will we be getting any more one-shots written by Brian K. Vaughan in the not-so-distant future?

No plans right now.

3) MOAR JESUS BADASSERY

Definitely.

4) How the fuck will people deal with zombie Beta when it happens?

Let's worry about human Beta first.

5) Is Rick going to make the Whisperers go extinct or will he spare the POWs?

Well, in #157, he said he's going to kill every last motherfucking one of them.

6) Are Negan and Rick working together?

So far.

That will be all. Also, Charlie's art is absolutely gorgeous.

Nafis Rahaman
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Yes, it absolutely is.

Kirkman and company,

I thoroughly enjoyed TWD #156. I have to say that, where I thought Alpha was going to get some Delta (dick), now we all know that Negan came away with some HEAD.

How many drafts of this did you go through before you were done?

Anyway, this leads me to a couple questions that I am sure will be answered in future issues but here they are anyway:

1) Was Negan playing Alpha all along or did he change his mind last minute?

If he's to be believed, he was playing her all along.

He was playing her all along... but he was enjoying himself most of the time.

2) I "think" Alpha was getting some romantic feelings for Negan but was he feeling the same way toward her?

I think they might have gotten along, had he not killed her. But I don't think Negan had any feelings for her at all. Negan doesn't really care about anyone. For more on that... keep reading the HERE'S NEGAN story in IMAGE+!

3) Did Negan do all this to win Rick's future trust or does he have some payback in mind for Rick?

Again, if we're believing Negan, trust.

4) Just how pissed off is Beta going to be when he finds out Alpha's head has been cut off? I think he was hoping to bone her at some point but that is just my take.

Why is it always about sex with you folks? Come on!

Anyway, great work as usual. I loved the panel with the "Fuck yeah! You see that shit?" when Negan shot the wild boar with an arrow. Can't wait till next month!

Chris Crossont
Baltimore, MD

Thanks for writing in!

Dear Kirkman and TWD

I really like that we've been seeing more scenes with Siddiq lately, and I've noticed that he shares some characteristics with Axel, from him being hard working to kind of humorous and goofy. Even the look is similar from him having lots of facial hair and being larger than the others. Is that intentional seeing how you said you loved Axel? I can't be the only one who's noticed the similarities between them. Next issue can we expect Siddiq to start saying "you follow me?" How far will this go? Please don't kill Siddiq. I find him to be one of the most interesting characters right now. #IfSiddiqDiesWeRiot

-Cameron

Comparing Siddiq to Axel? Man, that makes me like him even more (even if I feel it's coincidental).

Totally coincidental. They're very different characters in my mind... we'll see more of Siddiq and we'll cement those differences. I promise.

How does Negan get all that Just for Men and hair gel in the Apocalypse?

Daniel

The barter system.

hey guys just wanna say that negan killing alpha was a real good twist I always thought they'd at least get to fuck once am I right? but anyways I'm here to ask if the season seven premier will be bloody? and I mean BLOODY like give me fucking nightmares bloody! it just has to be as epic as it was in the comics but seriously guys come on make it scare little kids!

make me proud,

Sergio Rivera Mexico city, Mexico

How much blood does production use every episode? That's got to be a budget line item, right?

The season 7 premiere is far bloodier than anyone wants it to be. It's going to be awesome. I continue to be amazed by what AMC lets us get away with.

See you the first week of October for Part 3 of "The Whisperer War." In which MAJOR events occur.

Also, check out the preview for Skybound's next MAJOR title, GREEN VALLEY. Max Landis and Giuseppe Camuncoli make comic book magic, and deliver an incredible adventure... where nothing is quite what it seems. First issue comes out the same day as TWD, too!

-Sean Mackiewicz

GREEN VALLEY is totally amazing. The team Sean has put together to pull off this book is top notch. I think you'll all really love this book, so give it a shot.

And be back here next month for that "major" event Sean alluded to!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

RIP Lucille. I think you got something special when you're mourning the "death" of an inanimate object. Let's just get to the letters before we all start tearing up...

Let the tears flow! WEEP! WEEP FOR A BASEBALL BAT, YOU MONSTERS!

Y'know, it's kind of funny to think about, but we don't point out every issue that Sean Mackiewicz's dry, boring comments are bolded, and my witty, hilarious, entertaining and informative comments are bold and italicized... and I'm Robert Kirkman. I wonder how many people don't realize who is responding as they read these things. Or maybe you guys have always known who is who and I'm wasting my time here. Or maybe it doesn't matter.

Nothing matters. It's Friday afternoon, you've kept me waiting for your responses until the last minute... Lucille is dead. Nothing matters. This letters page better be fucking magical.

Dear Walking Dead,

Ohio?

-Trevor Johnson
Mississippi

Maaaaaybeeee... How much can Stephanie be trusted? How much can I be trusted? You'll just have to wait and see.

What's wrong with Ohio?!

The best black and white cookie I ever had was made by a grandmother in Ohio. That was a great cookie.

Dear Mr Kirkman,

It's only part 1 and The Whisperer War already has a different vibe than All Out War. I'm loving the story more than ever now. But how come we're only seeing William now? How has he been able to hide for so long? Unless he came in during the time jump...

Either way I'm looking forward to seeing some blood spill in the Whisperer War, maybe even some of the popular and loved characters...

And I'm so looking forward to seeing more Dwight/Negan and of course Lucille together.

Sincerely,
Bryant P.
Germantown, MD

You probably got your fill of Dwight, Negan and Lucille this issue... at least, I hope.

As for William, this is all part of the plan. We haven't seen much of the Kingdom, and it's a very different place without Ezekiel. Stay tuned.

As we stand on the Abyss of the Whisper War and I wait to check off the characters as you've set them up on the last page (what a set up! They're all goners! Way to

go Negan!) , I would like to say it drives me crazy that besides Rick in the First issue, I don't think anyone has ever ridden a bicycle in THE WALKING DEAD.....but Then I realized the comic is called "THE WALKING DEAD".

Ken/ San Francisco

Can you imagine how many thousands of bikes are rusting on the lawns of America? How come no one's tripped over one yet while fleeing a walker?

(If you want to get your fill of bikes, check out PAPER GIRLS. It's pretty awesome, even if the paper girls aren't popping wheelies and doing all sorts of rad BMX shit most of the time.)

Hey Guys

huge walking dead fan I've been reading for a few years now and I just recently started collecting the single issues.

I've noticed that in the last Part of the Kick ass Whisperer war Variant covers we see Negan just taking down a whisperer with his bare hands. But is it really a whisperer? I noticed that combat gloves are seen trying to push Negan away. You know who also wears combat gloves...Dwight. On the cover of issue 151 you can even see them in close detail and they match the ones shown on the Variant cover.

Could this Variant be a little hint towards Negan and Dwight's showdown towards the end of the war? or am I looking too deep into things

Long time Fan
-Ryan

You're looking too deep into things. (Or ARE you?)

Or is he indeed?

My Dear Messrs. Kirkman, Adlard, Gaudiano, Rathburn and Mackiewicz,

A word about electrocution, in response to Quinn Connelly's question: typically, if a human is killed by current running through his or her body (e.g. by a bolt of lightning or an electric chair), it's due to cardiac arrest from disruption of the electrical signals that cause the heart to beat. The skin is burned at the current's entry and exit points, and depending on how long the current runs, the body will heat up and may start to cook, but this is secondary.

The guy Nicholson's Joker flash fries with his joy buzzer is stone dead of a heart attack; the flambé is just for show. Not to say that you couldn't cook zombie brains with an electric yarmulke, but pointy objects sound like a more reliable way to make these suckers go the way of all flesh. Or what's wrong with good old fire? How well do roamers burn?

Mered Parnes, MD
Houston

Mered went to med school so we didn't have to. Roamers burn well, but they still do a lot of lurching and unpredictable shit in the time it takes them to burn dead.

Dear all,

It occurred to me a little while ago that it would almost certainly have been possible in 2010 to get a mobile phone network up and running for a community the size of the ASZ. It would certainly be possible from 2014 onwards. When I saw the comment about Eugene and mobiles in #157 I did some research (ok, I did one Google search) and found this, from 2007:

<http://www.geek.com/mobile/terranet-creates-peer-to-peer-cellphone-network-568085>

It would work, and it would probably work just fine. A "mesh" of mobile phones, no masts from a mobile provider needed, can pass calls and call requests between individual phones in the ad hoc network. The only infrastructure needed would be a community with enough electricity to charge mobiles. You would also need a reasonably well motivated nerd. One that, just by way of an example, had just lost their girlfriend in a horrible murder would probably have sufficient need for a project to occupy their mind.

So, if you want TWD to have community based mobile phones (and the community could be a convoy of travellers maybe) then it could be done. To be honest, not having someone do it is a bit of a plot hole.

Oh, and just so you know - I'm loving The Whisperers War arc, I wish it was going to be longer.

Mike
Derby, UK

P. S. Still haven't forgiven you for Shiva, never mind Rosita, probably not going to.

Certainly a cool idea that could be practical in TWD. I'm pretty sure all those cell phones are lying on the lawn next to the rusting bikes. Oh well...

Robert,

I often discuss Walking Dead with a coworker of mine. We recently had a hypothetical discussion on how the core group of characters would be different if Shane had lived and continued to lead the group. The basic idea being that Rick Grimes never made it out of the hospital, and so, was never there keep Shane "in check."

Our main thought: with Shane being the much more violent and hot-headed of the two, and perhaps more willing to kill in the name of survival, would he have been better equipped to handle Negan? Could the extreme loss of life that occurred during "All Out War" have been avoided with Shane in charge? With Shane as leader, would the group have been stronger or more capable to stand against Negan's Saviors? Could the whole thing have been avoided with Shane's team being able to meet the threat with an equal level of brutality? In other words, would Negan have seen somebody that maybe he shouldn't mess with?

Good questions... though I'm not sure Negan has met anybody that he wouldn't mess with.

Do you ever consider these scenarios? Have you ever thought about a "what if" type of flashback issue that explores these ideas?

Not to take away from Rick Grimes, who has more than earned his place! But the idea of "Walking Dead: What If?" is an interesting thing to talk about.

Adam Clements
Enfield, Connecticut

Sure, I think about this kind of thing all the time.

And there are a few points in the series where I planned or at least considered to go one way... and then didn't. And there were some plots that got abandoned because of that. There is that fabled TWD: CUTTING ROOM FLOOR hardcover book that was going to publish my hand-written plots for the first 50 issues or so. I never got around to doing that... because I'm irresponsible and got sidetracked. I'm awful. But I still hold out hope that one day I'll get around to finishing that book. We already have the material for THREE volumes... sigh.

Re. Issue 157

Re. The eagerly anticipated revelation that Aaron didn't have to die to see Jesus.

Response: OMG!!!! If this comic had color, they'd both be blushing. Oh, they're adorable together. Thank you, Mr. Kirkman! THANK YOU!

Most sincerely yours,

B. Hawkes
Nova Scotia, Canada (the country immune to election madness)

Postscript:
Just read in the Letter Hacks the following: "Still alive this issue, but wait til next issue. Oh boy..."

You guys are fucking evil.

Thank you! Jesus and Aaron are never going to die... until they do, that is! But at least there will be some happiness in between, right?

We hope!

Hello!

The Whisperer War Part 1 is pretty good so far and can't wait for the rest of the arc!

The concern I have isn't really relating to the arc or the issue but on Dwight:

Does his left eye work? It's been a few years after All Out War when we saw him use eye drops, and I was just wondering if he's just numb to the pain now or if he just lost the vision in that eye.

#TWDwhispererWar!

Proud OG+ Walker member
Andy Gasal
Vermont

He still uses the eye drops. I swear we've shown him use them since ALL OUT WAR, but maybe not. I promise he still uses them, constantly.

That wasn't quite as magical an experience as I hoped for, so better luck next issue. See you next month for Part 4 of "The Whisperer War." In between now and then we have a little thing called TWD Season 7 premiering on Sunday, October 23rd. Hopefully, we'll have finished building this bomb shelter well before then. Peace!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Yeah... that one's going to be a doozy. I'm prepared for the riots. Bring it on!!

-Robert Kirkman

We are in no way actually endorsing riots. Watching TV should be FUN. Couches are for snuggling, not violence.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

For all of you wondering where Lydia would fall after learning about her mother... there's your answer. But Hilltop's only just started to burn, and that community is going to have to fight for their entire way of living next issue.

So intense! I hope you guys are digging this arc. I know everyone involved here, except Sean (because he has no joy in his heart), is having a great time. By the time this issue is in your hands the SEVENTH season of the television show will have debuted, and you will finally know who Negan killed. (I'm not even saying it here just to be safe).

DARYL!

So great to have that finally out there.

And oh, man is it an emotional time on the show. This was a really difficult one for all involved, but we knew we had to go all out for Negan's intro. And man, oh, man! Jeffrey Dean Morgan is a WELCOME addition to the cast. He's so great.

You know what else is great? Answering letters!

Is it though? I'll do it, especially since NO MORE DARYL!!!

Hello Skybound Crew,

Although I like war story arcs in "The Walking Dead" because they are typically more fun to read, killing off Gabriel in the opening sequence of issue #158 was a poor decision. Some may argue that it is just building up the eventual ongoing war between the Whisperers and Alexandria in the upcoming pages; however, I say it was poorly executed. Gabriel, a look-out up in the watch tower, gets rattled by the upcoming herd of walkers trips and falls down the ladder which leaves him suspended upside down conveniently for Beta to kill. Come on! How more ridiculous can this get? First off, I am no expert on human anatomy by why would a person's ankle bone rip apart once being tangled on a ladder rung? Is that even humanly possible? Secondly, assuming for the sake of argument Gabriel was rattled enough to fall from the ladder (which I doubt would be the case because I have more faith in his composure under duress) why didn't fall he fall to ground? How is possible that one foot (not to mention with a broken bone) wrapped around a ladder rung could hold up his entire weight?

Thank you Skybound Team,

John Gentile

It's all possible, John! Damn it! And Gabriel wasn't so much rattled as he was hurriedly trying to get down the ladder to warn Dwight and the rest. Sorry you didn't like that character's exit... there are plenty more deaths ahead, maybe you'll like them more.

Dear Kirkman and Crew,

First off, although I doubt you will read this *wink* *wink* *nudge* *nudge*, I wanna say how great the walking dead is and how amazing it continues to be. I am writing this to you to find out your thoughts on a couple of things.

1. What ever happened to the story about Negan's scar?

Maybe just stay tuned on that one.

2. When Eugene is talking to the woman on the radio, she says that someone came in who only put walker guts on

him to survive. Any chance of this being Nick from fear the walking dead?

It's possible this was a wink and a nudge to that... but this series is not connected to Fear The Walking Dead. That series is separate.

3. Does it bring you joy to f*** with your fans on a daily basis? I bet it does

In my opinion, some of the most interesting storytelling comes through provocation and misdirection. Otherwise, you'd just be getting exactly what you want, which is no fun. Like when a lot of you wanted Rick to kill Negan. Imagine that!

That's how I look at it, Sean. I'm not twisting and turning things to provoke but to entertain!

Thanks a lot and I hope that you get the chance to see this,

Devon Marcus
Montreal, Quebec

P.s. I hope all the fans check out the walking dead novels. Jay Bonansinga is an amazing writer and he continues to write amazing walking dead books even though Mr. Kirkman in not a part of the current books. It's really that good

Jay just sent in a draft of his latest novel, so yes, please do continue checking out THE WALKING DEAD novels from St. Martin's.

They are very cool. It's great to have another little corner of The Walking Dead universe getting explored, and Jay is doing amazing work on these books.

Mr. Kirkman,

I've been re-reading the first compendium lately, and something is bothering me that I can't seem to find anyone else talking about.

Rick's iconic Police jacket has been with him since issue 1, and I always loved the look of it. However, one part of it that I loved was the badge on the front, and the two patches on the shoulder area. I thought they made the jacket really stand out, and just upped the cool factor of it for me.

However, as the series progressed, they started being added less and less. The shoulder patches mostly at first, but also soon the badge in the front. However, they were still there every once in a while until issue 89, where they finally disappeared for good. (Mid issue, might I add.)

So, my question is, why were they removed? It's obviously the same jacket he's worn since the beginning, just without the police markings. I'm still a bit disappointed over their removal, because like I said, I thought they made the jacket just so much cooler looking. The jacket is still cool, don't get me wrong, but I miss seeing it on covers like issue 115 or any issue he wears it past issue 89.

Also, will we ever see the jacket again? Besides the hatchet, its one of the most defining things about Rick. Even without the patches and badge, that jacket should be with him until he dies (so maybe Andrea can wear it like she wore Dale's hat, if you catch my drift)

Thank you and I'm looking forward to the rest of the Whisperer war arc! I can't wait to see who you brutally kill next.

Niko

Well, I'm going to blame this on the editor... and while Sean wasn't yet on the series when issue 89 hit, I'm still going to lay the blame squarely at his feet.

SHAME on you, Sean. SHAME on you.

**You can STILL find Sina Grace on Twitter:
@SinaGrace.**

Robert,

I'm a big fan of everything Walking Dead. I was wondering if you had ever considered maybe adding characters from The Telltale Walking Dead games. Like adding Clementine to the series. Since she has a link to Glenn in the first game, maybe she could talk with Maggie about him. Also, is Claudia ever going to find Rick and tell him about his brother? Anyway these were just questions. I love the series and I can't wait for season 7.

Thanks, Callum

Clementine's story is far from over in the Telltale games, so until that happens, it'd be hard to involve her, or anyone else, in the comic series. So check out the third season of Telltale's TWD, A New Frontier, when it's released this month, for more Clem—and some more comic book connections.

Dear Letterhacks,

Although zombie bites are now largely avoided I was wondering if amputation was the only way to save a person from the infection? What if a person was bit on the neck, could the wound be cauterized with say a hot poker? The heat would destroy the infected tissue if applied rapidly, or does the infection from the bite spread too fast?

Kind regards,

Jason
Kwinana, Western Australia.

Until that situation presents itself in the series, we won't know. I wouldn't want to reveal something like that here. Logically, the only reason amputation works is it keeps the nastiness of the bite from killing the person by stopping the spread of the infection from the bite. So, theoretically anything done to prevent that spread would work.

Kirkman and Kompany,

I screamed opening this comic. I have quite a few things to say about The Walking Dead 158:

1. I gradually began to love Gabriel MORE AND MORE each issue. But, of course, after a great issue-start to a frickin' WAR Gabriel has one of the most spine-tingling deaths ever. One of those deaths that can make you do a baby-barf in your mouth, ha. That was extremely disappointed.
sad face

**Not everyone dies honorably or with dignity.
Especially in TWD.**

2. AND ANOTHER THING, I am so hooked on this darn CB Radio with Eugene and, to my knowledge, some lying chick from "Ohio". The quotes are necessary, as I do think she is lying. I can't wait to see more of this. Rick could have found out this Issue and he could have all been ruined! Thank god he isn't a pusher and trusts Eugene. Stephanie better not be lying, don't hurt Eugene like you did to Rosita!

I think you're in the minority re: whether we can trust "Stephanie from Ohio" or not. Trust is such a major theme in this series, that it's fun seeing that build in the background while Rick and Dwight have their own trust issues with Negan in the main story.

3. I absolutely LOVED the panel with Jesus and Michonne viewing the Whisperer battle from afar, before rushing into battle. That whole scene gave me chills. Great job on that whole page panel art, Charlie! I'm glad to see those to be forming a friendship, especially now they are revealing "boy talk" to each other.

Well, it stinks I have to wait another month to see Negan brutally murder Beta in cold blood. I sure am excited for that.

Toodles,
Aidan B.

Heh... that one didn't quite go how you expected it!

Hey guys,

Quick Question, Do you already have ideas/plans for the next 50 - 100 issues in terms of who will die and potential storylines? And if you do, which I assume you most probably do, how hard is it to go that far ahead and plan out what you think will be most beneficial to the comic moving forward, taking into account what storylines are currently taking place?

Keep up the good work!

Lachlan Morris, Australia

Well, at least the next six issues are mapped out, as Charlie just drew the next six covers, conceived to really allow us to tease and fuck with you for six more months. If we did that sort of thing.

I've discussed this before, but I do have a rough roadmap for the next 50 to 100 issues at all times (and some little ideas for beyond that), and it all takes shape as I write and plot to it. So it's kind of like I know exactly what the next 25 issues are, broadly, but I don't know specifically what issue 178 will be, yet. But all I have to do is pick which chunk of my overall plot fits into that issue... if that makes sense.

Dear Walking Dead Gang,

Man oh man, what an issue. Dwight being awesome as usual. Negan delivering some hilarious lines. Jesus doing a goddamn back flip off his horse because he fucking can.

And let me tell you, Beta is one big, scary bastard. Gabriel's death was straight up gruesome. But you know who scares me more than Frowny McTwoKnives?

Fucking Tara. I swear this must be only the second time this woman has appeared in the book and AGAIN she is threatening to cut a man's testicles off. Not cool Tara. Not fucking cool. I shudder to imagine the countless times she has made this threat, and shudder still to imagine the times she has made real on it.

What I'm trying to say is it'd tickle me pink to see this girl get shishkebab'd by Beta. Make it happen, team.

You weren't the only one to write in about Tara's reappearance. Expect to see her more in the issues to come. As for threats vs. making it a reality? Time will tell...

Jack Gunderson,
Cincinnati, OH

P.S. When do we get to see Yukimo kill something with that cool bow? It's been like two years, damnit.

I know, I know. It's coming... I promise.

Well, that's another Letter Hacks for the ages. Be here next month for Part 5 of "The Whisperer War". Where we are doing something we haven't done in a while... and it isn't pleasant.

-Sean (no joy in my heart) Mackiewicz

It's going to be great! See you all then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hilltop is burning. The Saviors are plotting. And Frowny McTwoKnives is still lurking. Next issue is the BIG conclusion to "The Whisperer War", and there are plenty of surprises left in store. But first, this month we eulogize Lucille.

This sexy bold writing is Sean. The dull italics are Robert. Is it weird that we still occasionally explain who's who after 161 issues? Of course it is!

I'm dull? I'm dull? Whatever.

I'M IN SHOCK.... RIP LUCILLE. YOU WILL BE MISSED. Now excuse me as I grieve for the next four weeks.

Bianca

Your grieving period is over. Negan, however, is still processing. Let's see how the fuck that works out.

Alright, so I'm fifteen going on sixteen in 2 days, and I have been absolutely swallowing these volumes. I got into them in Barnes and Noble, and kept reading ever since. I took a HUGE break, and managed to catch up to 125 or so chapters in the course of 3 days, and I CAN'T F*****G WAIT FOR FROWNY MCTWOKNIVES TO GET HIS ASS TAKEN DOWN AND I DONT MEAN DOWN TOWN, I MEAN SIX FEET UNDERGROUND!!! Tbh, I get that this was a few volumes ago, but Rosita's death is still in my mind, because there is a girl in my school, who's name is REYSITA, and she's ALSO cuban and I REALLY don't want her head to be on a spike :(BUT...I love the comics so much, I don't even need to see the show. PLEASE KEEP IT UP (and sorry for bothering you)!

First of all, this email arrived with the subject THE BEST COMIC EVER... Love your enthusiasm! But don't think about girls' heads being on or off spikes. It's uncomfortable.

Yeah, I think Reysita is safe, so don't worry about her. Now... Reysita... that's a STAR WARS/THE WALKING DEAD mash-up waiting to happen...

Dear Mr. Kirkman,
This is my first time writing in and I'd be honored to see my this in the Letter Hacks.

A lot of firsties this month. Why? Because you wrote solid letters that also came in pretty soon after release, and I'm pulling most of these from the very top of the mailbag. Dreams are coming true this month!

First off how dare you sir!?! I have been buying the comics for years now and have every single issue after the first compendium and there have only been 2 deaths up till now that have really hurt me, Dale being the first, then there was Glenn in issue 100 and now you have gone too far sir. How dare you kill Lucille!!! I am just in shock that you would

kill the only thing that Negan loves and with doing so I have 2 questions:

1. How will losing Lucille affect Negan, will he go all Hulk mode on the whisperers and Beta for destroying his one true love?

More on that next issue.

2. Will there be a Lucille Jr. In the near future?

Only time will tell...

Thank you for giving us one of the best comic series I have ever read and a story that has never gone stale in my eyes

Sincerely,
Rick Lister
Cleveland, OH

P.S Stephanie better not be lying and is actually in Ohio cause I feel like my home state doesn't get enough play

You already got an NBA championship this year. Let's not get greedy, Rick!

Hey Mack Eddie and Kirkmania,

So I gotta give you guys big time credit. Negan's line "She's Dead" had a lot more weight after his background story was revealed in Walking Dead mag. You almost had me pissing tears over here. Way to make the destruction of a fucking baseball bat emotional.

Best,
Sean

This is your semi-annual reminder to check on the "Here's Negan" story in IMAGE+ magazine. It's going to run 16 installments in total, Charlie's drawing the hell out of it, and it had a guy named Sean pissing tears. Our comics will overwrite your biology! Submit!

"Pissing tears"? I'm really going to have to use that somewhere.

YEAH GUYS I'M A WINNER! I'M A FUCKING WINNER. IT'S ALMOST 7 YEARS BY NOW I'M READING THIS COMIC. AND YES I DO LOVE THIS SHIT, SIR, I REALLY DO. BUT YEAH SOMETIMES YOU THINK "WHY AM I STILL READING THIS?" I'VE QUIT MY X-LOVERS AND I REALLY LOVED THOSE FELLAS BUT SOMETIMES IT JUST FADES YOU know? So why I still love TWD? I've got mix feelings about the TV show, I was scared. But you respect us, sir, you do. cause you always give me reasons to claim I'M A FUCKING WINNER FOR BEING DOING THIS THE LAST 7 YEARS OF MY LIFE AND I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU HIT ME HARD WITH THE 159 ISSUE. EVERY SINGLE PAGE EVERY SINGLE WORD EVERY SINGLE TRACE IT WAS THE KIND OF PLEASURE ONLY TWD COULD GIVE TO US. I CAN'T MENTION AN ISOLATED EVENT CAUSE EVERY SINGLE PART OF THAT ISSUE WAS PERFECT. thank you everyone

who keeps my existence a little more light.
ps: first time ever to email you guys

ps1: i love rick grimes
ps2: PLEASE COME TO BRAZIL

Arthur

Excessive caps lock is never good. But this guy's a fucking winner because he got his letter printed and you didn't. Did you even try?

This letter was DE-LIGHT-FUL.

Hi Guys

I have tried a few times to get a letter printed, so here goes again.

Today's your lucky day, Steve from Midlands, England! You went and did it, and now you need to set a new goal and achieve that one, too.

As a mature TWD (48) comic and TV series fan I wanted to let you all know that I am totally hooked, in fact I'm not sure I would know how to carry on if you ever stopped writing?? Even though I am married with 2 beautiful children a lovely house and a decent job. Just don't do it, right? Just don't! Ok here's my question? ,is it time for Rick to bow out? I mean what's his purpose now? Farmer, milk monitor....cook and chief bottle washer? Dwight is a natural leader? We have a fully functional army? And lets not forget Negan...lets be honest here Negan has more charisma and cunning in his dick than any of Ricks shattered body now. Trouble is I think we all want to see Rick become GREAT again, he's lost his power along the way and became 'the Wizard of Oz' the man behind the curtain. Do you think? or am I way off the mark? I would love to see Rick Grimes back in the driving seat again in some capacity. Would love your thoughts on this one Mr Kirkman

Love you all, fan from the beginning
Steve
Midlands, England

Steve believes in Rick Grimes. Popular sentiment these days.

Stay tuned.

Why haven't we seen betas face yet. What's the reasoning behind it. Is it Rick grimes elusive brother?

Ric
Leeds, UK

Ric, if you were a true fan like your countryman Steve, you'd know that the answer to where is Rick's brother has been answered already. I'm torn between telling you and not telling you... so let's just say you should go to www.panelsyndicate.com, and maybe you'll get what you're looking for.

Yeah, guys... come on... read that thing!

We will know soon why Beta likes to hide his face.

Hi Guys.

So cool that you actually answer fan mail. Or do you? Are these really fans' letters or do you make up questions to be witty?
Jeezum crow, you think we have the time?!

This month I've basically been pulling the first however many letters that came in to save time. Last call!

Yeesh, Sean... don't admit that. You need to keep up the appearance that you carefully curate this letters column. But yeah, I love the idea that it's easier to make all this up than just read and respond to letters.

Anywho, I thought "killing" Lucille in battle was genius. Took Negan down another notch. Showing he's vulnerable. Do you think he'll blame Dwight for sabotaging Lucille beforehand? If so, will he take revenge on him?

Thanks for so much enjoyment you bring to all our lives. Great way to spend a lazy, rainy afternoon!

~ MC Baran

You think Dwight sabotaged Lucille? There's not really much evidence of that. I'd just calculate that Negan's frequent use of Lucille incurred a lot of stress, and Beta's back was the literal breaking point.

If anyone sabotaged Lucille, it was Carl by shooting a big chunk of her out. So blame him, if anyone.

Dearest fuckasses,
I am soooo unapologetically HAPPY that that twat Lucille is dead. Glenn can finally rest peacefully and just in time for him to die again 'IRL'(right??). Good timing there ol Robby.

Secondly. WHY THE FUCK DID YOU GIVE LYDIA CARL'S FUCKING HAT!? AND WHAT THE FLYING FUCK DID SHE DO WITH IT?! Im not over it. I knew that ho couldnt be trusted and here we go. Turning that poor little bastard into the serial killer Negan pegs him for. "we can still...see each other" I hope Carl does kill her.

All in all Ive never had a comic book that makes me throw things and have anxiety to this degree so I really cant thank you all enough for this spectacle. Charlie Adlard is in a realm all his own and his Zombies are my all time favorite. I vomit in my mouth often. Bravo. Kirkman, you enrage me. Fuck you, you're awesome.

With unhealthy love,
LiAnna, 21, Denver

There was a point where I thought our fans were healthier and more sane than when I started on this book. That thought doesn't occur to me much anymore.

"I vomit in my mouth often" should really be randomly inserted into fan letters more often.

Next month is the grand finale. There is some epic shit contained within. See you in 2017—the Year of Vomiting in Your Mouth Often !

-Sean Mackiewicz

I hope you all enjoy the coming conclusion of "The Whisperer War", and I hope you have a great holiday season. Play some Super Mario Run—you'll enjoy it! Man, was Rogue One good or great? I vomit in my mouth often. See you next year!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back to the first issue of TWD in 2017! As the war ends, the Whisperers go NUCLEAR with a HORDE of walkers. Alpha's threat from the end of #143 is finally unleashed, and there's really no preparing for it... right?

It's gonna be insane! Make sure you come back here next month for #163, which will be 25 cents—and longer than usual! And #164 will also ship in February. Exciting times! Let's read some exciting mail!

Dear Mr. Kirkman and co.,

I just finished reading issue 160 and had to thank you for the cliffhanger you left us with. Not only does it confirm Lydia's loyalties, but we'll be picking right back up again next month with the whisperers wreaking hell on the Hilltop!

What is the deal with Beta and his face? He's willing to kill his own people to keep his identity a secret? Are we going to see his face? What's the story on that? It's very intriguing and I hope we find out more about Beta before he dies. I felt that Alpha died a bit prematurely with a lot of her story left untold and it would be nice to get to know Beta as a character. He's an interesting guy.

Just this evening I had a former colleague from DC email me about this self-same topic! He hypothesized that Beta is really... Shane. The fact that Shane was killed, then dug up and killed AGAIN didn't dissuade him. Unless Dr. Manhattan shows up, I really don't see how this can happen... but it's fun, right? Which is all a long way to say I have no fucking idea who Beta is, or if that's important. He seriously could've been a guy named Joe Shitstick once, but now he's Beta, and that's much more interesting.

Wow, DC editors are STUPID. Ignoring for a minute that Shane is dead... why would "Shane" give a shit if the Whisperers see his face? They don't know who Shane is. The Whisperers are going to go, "Holy crap, you're Shane—Rick Grimes's former partner?!" No. They wouldn't. Bad guess, unnamed DC editor guy!

I loved how you addressed the situation with Maggie and Dante. I gotta tell you, I really thought you were going to go the other way with it. Both of them were clearly flirting with one another and I was relieved that Maggie is still in love with Glenn and turned down Dante's advances. It was brilliantly timed as well to coincide with what's going on in the show. It gives us as fans a little more closure to Glenn's death and honors his memory. That had to be planned right? Unfortunately I can see either Maggie or Dante dying before the war is over. We better be getting at least one major character death in this arc!

Cheers,

Brad McTaggart from Fresno, CA.

I'm not CAPABLE of planning to that level. Eric Stephenson was complimenting me the other day on the fact that Negan has come back in the comic in a really prominent way exactly when he debuts on the show. That WAS NOT planned. When he said that, I said, "Huh... yeah... I hadn't realized that." And Maggie talking about Glenn... that was just the next step in the Maggie/Dante story... that I'd been building to for a while. Didn't plan for

that to line up with Glenn's death in the show at all. Happy accidents! I wish I WAS capable of that level of timing, though. That'd be sweet!

Hey Kirkman et. al,

So much awesomeness in Issue #160! Great to badass Michonne in action; can't wait to discover Beta Mctwknives' identity; love the intertwining stories & paneling. While I wouldn't have blamed Maggie if she gave Dante a chance, it was heartwarming to know that her heart belongs to Glenn. PLEASE don't kill Hershel Jr.! Hasn't Maggie suffered enough?! And yes, I loved the Season 7 premiere, but it left me utterly bereft & aching.

Anyway, the T.V. show obviously uses the comics for inspiration, now more than ever. Are there times where you let the show inform the comics? Like, do you bring some of the actors' personalities and the way they play the characters into the comics?

Definitely not on purpose. I look at the comic kind of as the "tip of the spear." It's the thing that came first, started it all, etc. Without the comic there is nothing else... so I do my best to keep the comic pure, trying not to let the existence of all this other stuff influence it.

Thanks again!....unless you kill Hershel Jr. If so, go get chomped by a walker. Not really. ;)

Karen
Los Angeles, CA

A lot of unexpected love for Hershel (who technically can't be a junior... so Young Hershel? Hershel the Younger?) in this month's letters. Pockets of love for minor characters come in waves. You'll get tired of him eventually, too.

Dearest Waking dead crew,

A. Whisperer wars is a stellar story arc and one I can't wait to see be interpreted and put into the show.

As I'm typing this, I'm watching the TV show adapt TWD #105, which is one of my favorite issues. They did good!

Yeah, that was really cool. Turned out great.

B. After every new episode, my co-workers swarm me, asking about the differences between the comics, the show, and what might happen in future episodes.

With that being said, do the comics have a spot on audible.com or something? I work with hair dressers and barbers (myself included), however they don't read as most of them fall into the stylist/barber stereotype of being stupid (myself excluded). To make TWD an audible series would be a great option for those who are illiterate such as my curious but naggy co-workers.

And if the option is already available, then damn. I may be having a "Flowers for Algernon" moment and am in fact as stupid as my aforementioned co-workers.

Autumn T.
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Sorry, no audio version of of the comic series. Kind of comes with the territory of comics (words + pictures). But I'm glad your co-workers

can't read, otherwise they'd all see how you called them "stupid." SHEESH! Even if I thought some of my co-workers were real dumb-dumbs, I'd NEVER allude to it in a letters column. No fucking way.

Yeah, I'd never call a DC editor I'd never met, whom I have on good authority is a nice guy, STUPID in a letters column. That'd be a real dick move.

But yeah, audio comics... no good. The art is kind of ESSENTIAL.

Hi, Robert and Sean.

I've been a huge The Walking Dead fan since the TV show aired. After season 5 ended I started to read the comics from #1 to the actual one (#160), and man... You guys have made me be in the edge of my chair reading this amazing comic book all day and night long.

By the way, let me just tell you that the work you're doing with the whole Dwight leader thing is going super great! And also I'm dying to know what happens next between him and Negan. But, I have to ask, in #159, just after Lucille dies :(, and Negan is upset as fuck, I see a roamer biting his left arm. That actually happened!?!? Because he seemed so calm after that frame.

Thick coat. He's fine.

Well, now I'm moving to the TV show. And, holy damn, I get why Abraham had to be killed, and also Glenn, but why the fuck the two of them in just one episode!? Guys, you barely gave me a heart attack that past Sunday, and I know that makes Kirkman feel good.

And I'd like to ask... Would you take the TV show to the 10th season? I know you would... I just need to read it from you, guys.

Sure. I have no say in the matter, but absolutely. Let AMC know Sean Mackiewicz is all for a 10th season.

Thank you, Robert, Charlie, Sean and Dave for being there since the beginning and make us all live an amazing experience with your work.

Loves you,
Hammurabi Herrera
México

Yeah, no telling how long the show will last. Very hopeful that we will last to Season 10 and beyond.

Robert,

I mentioned previously that I have a coworker (Mark) I discuss TWD with regularly. We've wrestled with the idea of Shane vs. Negan and you were cool enough to address our "what if" concept. Now we're debating a new question, with the recent developments of Negan's back story in IMAGE+. (Which we eagerly await with each new issue!)

What does Negan *really* want? (Aside from the obvious basic needs: food, shelter, safety) It's not a simple question, because we can see he's not entirely evil. An evil person wants to kill, and take, and thinks only of himself. Our perspective is: That's not Negan. If we had been following Negan for the last several years, we may have viewed Rick's team as evil. It's important to remember: for as many people as Negan has killed (albeit ruthlessly), Rick's team has also killed - many of those being Negan's very own Saviors.

A point mirrored in the conversation between Carl and Lydia this issue as well.

But the difference between Rick and Negan does appear to be the level of brutality involved with achieving the goal, whatever that is for Negan.

So, back to the question. What does Negan really

want? Whatever he ultimately strives for, he has somehow developed an "ends justify the means" approach that involves some pretty gruesome kill strokes...while at the same time making it clear that some things are still not ok - like rape.

Adam Clements & Mark Hilliard
Connecticut

Yeah, I can't really answer that in the letters column... just stay tuned. There's a lot to be learned about Negan in the coming issues... so, y'know... stay tuned!

First of all, let me say I love the comic. It moves forward at such a great pace and all the characters are so realistic and well written. It's a goddamn shame that most people only know of TWD from that crappy TV show where every single character is an idiot and everything is super drawn out and boring. Secondly, how the hell old is Carl supposed to be?

At the beginning of the series, it's very clearly stated that he's 7 years old. Then by the time we get to the whole war with Negan, it's been 2 years, as evidenced by having seen two winters go by. At one point when Morgan is dying in Alexandria, Carl even tells him that he's 8 years old, and that his birthday is in April. Assuming the All Out War arc takes place sometime in the spring or summer, that would make him 9 years old by the end of that arc. Then you do the time-jump, which is supposed to be 2 year. Not only do you specifically say it's been 2 years, but every online timeline I could find confirmed it. Now I'm not math wiz but if he's 9 before the 2 year time-jump he should be about 11 after it, right? But that's clearly not the case.

To clear things up, we've never officially said how long the time jump is. Suuuuure, it was printed in a letters page, but half of what we say here is lies, and most continuity fuzziness can probably be contributed to the meddling of Dr. Manhattan. Why's he always trying to fuck reality?

Because he has blue balls.

Not only does he look and feel much older, but Andrea refers to him as a teenager, and according to the Walking Dead wiki, he's 13. He also has sex with Lydia, who's 16, so unless you're saying he lost his virginity to a teenage girl at age 11, he's definitely older. So what's the deal? Something doesn't line up there. He went from 9 to 13 in the span of 2 years? You're usually so good about continuity, so this one glaring error has really been bugging me. Can you offer any explanation as to where those extra 2 years came from? Was the time jump longer than we thought? Has it really been 6 years since the start of the zombie apocalypse? Any response would be appreciated, thanks and keep up the good work otherwise.

Ben,
From Canada

The time jump was more than two years. There.

Dear TWD Crew,

I know Robert enjoys torturing us (it's ok, we like it) and that Sean is dead inside and all, but can you please not hurt baby Hershel? I just finished #160 and it made me nervous that the last little bit of Glenn that's lived on is in danger. You already crushed baby Judith. Not the biggest fans of kiddos, are you?

Regardless, I devour every issue and will continue to even if y'all go the baby killer route. That's true fan devotion, right?!

Thanks for everything, love you guys!
-Kendra Shackelford
Knoxville, TN

Toddler Hershel. We're out of the babykilling game, and officially into slaughtering toddlers.

Heh.

Hi from the UK you awesome motherfuckers

I read issues 1-112 in a block a few years ago when undergoing hospital treatment for Crohn's disease (A disease which causes ulceration and shrinking of the bowels - shit huh! -see what I did there!) and I absolutely fell in love with everything about it, the pacing, the artwork, the characters etc, I've always been a bit meh about the TV show due to too many filler episodes and the pacing of the show (kinda ironic as I love the pacing of the comics), the TTD video game rocks though.

Long story short I recently found myself up shit creek (Crohn's Joke part two!) when the symptoms flared up again after a period of remission and I began to spend more and more time in bed dosed up on morphine. I once again turned to TWD and have now read all the way up to 160 and thankfully it seems my symptoms are once again in remission. Coincidence...? I think not. The healing power of Messrs Kirkman, Adlard and all you other talented MoFo's is now confirmed.

Seriously though, your comics have helped me through some of the most painful, and depressing periods of my life, and there is no way I can ever thank you guys enough for that. Keep up the good work, and keep 'em coming because I won't be in remission forever and aside from that I fucking love this comic. I'm gonna give Kill or be killed a go and see how I get on with that, it'll be my fourth comic ever (along with Lobo, Preacher, and TWD) but my heart belongs to TWD and always will.

So as I said you fine gentlemen saved my life along with my sanity, and for that I thank you sincerely.
Much love from The UK!

Wezza, Sevenoaks, UK

That sounds absolutely awful, Wezza. Glad you're a bit better and we could cure your boredom. If you're giving new comics a shot, try INVINCIBLE. There's a shit-ton of issues available, and it's definitely better than Lobo.

If you like Lobo, you'll love OUTCAST.

Hey boys

Firstly - big fan. I've been reading the walking dead since day 1. And I've stuck with the show all the way through. Surprisingly this is the first time I'm writing in.

I was just thinking the other day. Sophia is still alive in the comics. But aside from that random (almost rape) in 2015. NOTHING has happened with this character. She's the surrogate daughter of Maggie, she's a sort of friend of Carl. But really, that's it.

There are so few of the original survivors left. Everyone has changed and grown and everyone gets a few pages to prove something, heck you even had Gabriel go through army training. But Sophia? She's about as relevant as an empty toilet roll. But its such wasted potential. This is a girl who has lived through everything (if not more) than Carl Grimes. She's been there since the beginning. Lived through her loopy moms suicide, her surrogate father getting his brains bashed in. She herself went through a loopy stage. But why?

Rob, I think maybe you have a plan for this character, maybe not, but from what it looks like, she's just used as a prop every now and then to remind the readers she still exists. And when she is used she's a victim. She spent years crying "mommy" in the comics, and when we saw her again post time jump, she's a victim of redneck bully teenagers.

What did she learn about life from Glenn and Maggie? How is she contributing to the new world? Whats her future at Hilltop? What skills does she want to develop? Eventually in a post Rick Grimes world I see the story line being taken on by Carl. And I think Sophia will be his right hand man. Please give this character some humanity. Please give her some relevance. She deserves as much.

Kind Regards
Tim

Yeah, I can admit Sophia definitely deserves more page time. It's just a big juggling act at this point. There's a lot going on. I need to burn down the Hilltop or something to get rid of some of these characters. All joking aside, there IS a plan for Sophia. We'll get around to it sooner or later.

Hello Kirkman, I am a fan of Jesus in the comics and the show. I just want to say I still am pissed off about the last name change. Monroe is way better than Rovia and I loved how realistic it was to have two different Monroe's. I don't think there was a really good reason to take Jesus' last name in the show because in real life we meet people with our last names. My last name is common and I had people in my classes with my own last name. It was cool to see that in the comics. They could have just explained on Talking Dead or in dialogue that Jesus wasn't related with Spencer.

Also... Spencer won't live much longer if it follows the comics and Jesus goes by Jesus anyway so changing it was pointless to me and other fans. My friend came up with the idea of Jesus having Monroe as his real birth last name in the show, but used "Rovia" as in honor to a past on partner or something along those lines. So it keeps Jesus real last name instead of smacking comic fans in the face. My friend brought this up to Tom as well. I hope you two can make this happen!

(PS I hope we see Alex soon as Jesus' partner!)

Thanks for reading this if you do,
You're awesome! Danny

Rovia. Roooovia. Roviiiia. Roviaaaaaa. Yeah, I like Monroe better, too. All you Jesus freaks, have you played the new Telltale TWD game, The New Frontier? Why, you ask? Oh, no reason. No reason at all.

I think if you're angry over a last name change like this... you need more problems in your life. It's different from the comic, sure... but half the characters don't even HAVE last names... so who cares if one is different, right? I love you guys, and you in particular, Danny... but "a smack to the face" is a bit extreme, I think. It's not like we made him straight or anything in the show. THAT would be a smack in the face. He's still the exact same character, and that's what's important.

Hey dudes!

I'm just gonna make this quick and go the point. Are we ever going to find out who the real father of Rosita and Eugene's baby would have been??? Like, seriously, man, I'm starting to think we need to bring Maury Povich or Jerry Springer into the equation...well, maybe a zombified version of either one.

You guys are the best!
-Dalton Faulder
Jackson Center, OH

Far too often there are questions like this that I choose not to answer in the letters column or I just say "stay tuned" or "keep reading." So here I'll say that will DEFINITELY be revealed within the next 12 issues. It's already plotted out!

Next month we celebrate Image's 25th anniversary with TWO issues! So the story continues in #163 for the low, low price of 25 cents (see what we did there?), and then later in February #164 comes out. We're working twice as hard because THAT'S how much we love you.

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome to the letters page! This issue is pretty special for a number of reasons. First, it's issue 163, which not many series get to. I think, like, 10 in the history of comics have. Two, this is our special introductory-priced 25-cent issue... so maybe lots of you reading this are first-timers... or have only read the trades and thought a cheap issue like this was a good chance to dip your toes in the walker-infested waters. We also printed LOTS. This is definitely the most we've printed of any single THE WALKING DEAD issue, which, honestly, was the goal. If you've made it this far, I'm the editor, Sean. And the surly italics belong to Robert.

Sean, you idiot, there have been tons of comics over issue 163. At least 30... or so. (This is the kind of magic you've been missing if you only read the collections.) But, yes, this issue has received orders for nearly 750,000 copies... which is huge. We thought, what better way to get people excited for the 25th ANNIVERSARY OF IMAGE COMICS than to do some very special micro-priced comics! (INVINCIBLE #133 and OUTCAST #25 are also 25 cents this month.) We never could have imagined it would go over this well. I have to say, that's PARTICULARLY funny because I actually lose money for every copy sold, since it's only a quarter... and Rus Wooton ain't lettering no comic for free! So as the numbers climbed as orders came in... it was somewhat bittersweet. Christmas at the Kirkman household will be a sock-heavy event for 2017. It builds character, I'll tell them, but tears will sadden my heart all the same.

So I hope you guys liked this 25-cent issue!

To make things even CRAZIER, I wanted to extend this issue to a full 28 pages of story! So there's even more bang for your quarter-buck! But, really, this whole thing is done as a thank you. Charlie, myself, and everyone involved with THE WALKING DEAD have been so lucky to have the support of this fan base over the years. It's something that we appreciate far more than words can convey, so we do our best to show that we care deeply for this fan base when we can.

We love you guys! Sorry these stories are sad so often!

This is my first time writing in so here it goes.

How the HELL is Maggie going to react when she sees Negan out of his cage and free to wander the fields of Georgia. I imagine she's going to have a fit or something. It would be insane to see some sort of interaction between Negan and Baby Hershel considering he smashed his dad's face in. Maggie dies and Hershel raised by Negan spin off? Love all you guys and don't know what I would do

without the walking dead. Keep up the hard work on the comic and the show!

- Mason
Essex, England

That *would* be interesting. Will it ever happen? It's like Ol' Dirty Bastard said, "Negan is for the kids."

Where is Negan? What I mean by this, is where is the Negan we used to know? I've been a ridiculously huge Negan fan since day one. He became my favourite character real quick. Where is he? The character you have now is not Negan. He has some decent lines, but that's it. He doesn't seem like he would have ever been believable as a leader, much less a guy anyone would have bowed or kneeled before. He lets Dwight berate him on a fairly regular basis, for fuck sake. He's anything but scary and his biggest goal seems to be to impress Rick.

I've remained hopeful that things would turn around, maybe it would be a trick, leading to betrayal. I've lost that hope. Even while he was in prison, he acted like Negan. There was absolutely no remorse or anything like that. He even brought up what he did to Glenn, just to get to Rick. Once he got out, he killed Brandon, then Alpha. That made perfect sense. After that, he's gone downhill. If he had started this way, I'm not sure I ever would have cared about the character. I want them to See NEGAN again.

Thank you,

Rico M.

Sorry you're not happy with the current direction of the character, Rico. His time being incarcerated has changed him, to be sure. But I wouldn't rule out seeing more of that ruthless Negan popping up from time to time.

O Dearest Robert,

Where did your balls go? I'm genuinely concerned that you may have a hernia.

You have to love our readers' sense of anatomy! Off to med school you go!

In the first war of this series, shit got fucked up real quick. The Governor ass raped Rick and Co. (some literally) and you had a mother holding her baby get shot. You had some Carl sized brass balls then. But now, the only people we've lost in The Whisperer War was a baseball bat and a character we forgot existed. Hell, we didn't even lose any pointless redshirts in the Hilltop attack. Where is all the good shit you promised? Nothing monumental has happened in 5 out of the 6 issues of this war, so unless the Whisperers secret weapon is an atomic bomb, I really don't see

how this will end up being the best war. Did the Whisperers completely fall apart without Alpha? Cause one person killed more people than an entire army. I don't get it.

I hope you find your balls sometime soon.

Best regards,
Philip Bilyeu

I do my best to remain in constant contact with my balls. Sorry if it sometimes doesn't seem that way. In my opinion, there should be LESS death in the book now, MUCH less, because the careless people, the scared people... the people learning how to live in this world... are already dead. This is the cream of the crop, so to speak. So, yes, there can be a conflict like the Whisperer War, and there can be very little death. You think Michonne is going to just let herself get bitten by a zombie or stabbed by a Whisperer at this point? It wouldn't be believable! Rick, Andrea, Carl, Jesus, Dwight, Negan, Maggie... these people are tempered steel! That's not to say they're invulnerable, or "safe" now... but it would take a LOT to kill them.

You forgot to mention Eugene. Unless...

Dear Kirk-Fucking-man and his ama-fucking-zing crew

I haven't read all the letters you have published, so I don't know if someone has talked about this. Well, to make some context, I'm a medicine student, and I took a general formation course about Grieving process in the health professionals.

Oh, shit! An ACTUAL med student. Do YOU know about this balls-hernia stuff? You do?! Fascinating!

So we learnt its stages, kinds, characteristics, etc. And one of the risk factors to suffer a pathologic grieving (PG) is to have more than one grieving process at the same time or in a short amount of time. It doesn't mean that if you have what I said you will have a PG, but with the amount of grieving the people should have undergo in TWD, I'm pretty sure almost everyone should have a PG. So there comes the question, did you know what I told you? I don't mind if the answer is yes or no, because what I really want to know is if you realize that almost everyone in the comic should be more fucked up than what they are ('cos it always can be fucking worse, you prove it every month)

Great #161, by the way. I almost cried thinking Carl could die. Please don't kill him, neither Rick nor Andrea. I don't give as much fucks for anyone else as I do for these three.

Fucking-motherfuckery greetings
Javier Contreras N.
Santiago, Chile

Everyone should be more fucked up? Noted.

Hey Guys,

1. THANK YOU for creating so many badass women for me to admire. I've always been a bit of a tomboy, and to see that I may have an edge in the zombie apocalypse is pretty cool. Makes me worry less about figuring out how to use makeup

and hair goop.

How half our population got roped into painting their faces every day is something I will never understand. Who has time for that, really? Hair goop on the other hand... let's not be savages.

2. Are you willing to give Eugene an official Asperger's diagnosis? That's how I interpret the character, but I'm not sure if that's what you guys are going for.

That's a part of his character, yes. I'd say Eugene is definitely on the spectrum... and I'd argue he's the most important character for the potential to rebuild society. He's very important.

So he's "safe", huh? Unless...

3. Is it fucked up that when I have a baby, I want to include the full page image of Maggie & Hershel with the "YAY" caption somewhere in the nursery? I feel like it's a great metaphor for the struggles of parenting. Not sure my husband will go for it, but it's worth a shot.

I recommend putting it inside your liquor cabinet. That's where I'd put it.

All parents get exactly what you're saying.

Looking forward to 162 and beyond!

Nikki - Pearl River, NY.

Me too!

Long time fan, love what you all do, pleasantries blah blah blah

Nicely done.

Listen. People (not only in the hacks, but fans I talk to in person) are counting out Lord Grimes way too quickly. The man isn't fighting on the lines because he doesn't need to anymore! He's built his larger world, and he has implemented a system that keeps others, along with those he cares most about SAFE, and as long as that's intact, he's staying in. However, now that he's a little more threatened, he's getting ready. Readers may have missed him wearing his bomber jacket (or the ass kicking jacket as my friends and I call it) when speaking to Dwight a few issues back, but once I saw it back on his shoulders, I knew it was time. At risk of being Cliche, I STILL believe in Rick Grimes. Also, these parallels between Rick/Carl and Rick/Magna are incredible. Very ready for Carl to take any lead he can get.

Are we creating parallels? Did I miss that?

Just go with it, Sean.

That being said! The Saviors plan on cleaning up once Rick and Alexandria are weakened, which is leading me to believe a certain (until recently) baseball bat wielding maniac is going to have a very important decision to make. Does he finish what he started? Or do we get the first glimpse of a new Negan? Regardless I couldn't be more excited for what's to come. Keep em coming fellas!

Sam Romesburg
Frederick, MD

Not telling! Keep reading.

Hey Walking Dead People,

I have a question about Sherry's big plan: Aren't there any Saviors that are at least somewhat cool with Rick, seeing as he basically got rid of the tyrant who made some of their lives pretty shitty? Also, I would be delighted if Dwight ends up shooting Sherry through the eye, Abraham style. (I expect to be credited if you choose to do this)

Also in 157, Magna and Dwight had a bit of a moment, to Laura's dismay. Is that going anywhere?

Keep doing you,
Cal
Cincinnati, Ohio

You'll just have to keep reading to see! And as far as Sherry and the Saviors' plans... we'll see more of that in the coming issues, and all will be explained. People don't always appreciate the things you do to "fix" their lives...

Robert,

You can lie to yourself about how you're not just reusing the same tired story over and over again but you can't lie to your customers. And just as an aside if the people buying your stuff believes that stuff has gotten repetitive it has. You may have different "big bads" but essentially everything is the same. The group is presented with some adversary that is stronger than them in some way and they work to make up those deficiencies to have some grand showdown. Now out of these Rick has won two against the hunters and Negan and lost against the Governor. So hey maybe Rick loses or even dies its still the exact same story told in a slightly different way. And now your going to recycle the Saviors? Sean said they'd all have vastly different lives after this arc; different from what? Different would be living a stable life without some big bad to face. Different would be literally anything other than what has happened so far. So they are forced from the Hilltop seen it or they rebuild seen it or they go on the road seen it or they fight the Saviors again seen it. You still have the number one rated show on cable and your book sells great but just go read what your customers are saying. Hint hint it's exactly what I'm saying now and what people have been saying since you debuted Negan. Ratings have dipped this season, right? You just keep on lying to yourself and worse your customers and you'll be remembered as the guy who wrote a very good comic that was adapted to tv but got full of himself ran out of ideas and kept repackaging the same story over and over until everyone lost interest. I quit after Alpha marked the border because of this. I came back recently but to be honest I wish I hadn't. The Saviors again really? But I'm sure you'll ignore this and every other customer who complains and well have another survivor's vs big bad of the week. I'll finish this arc because it's only one more book but you'll have to have something pretty spectacular to get me to stay and no Savior war 2.0 won't cut it.

Adam Hurst

Letter Hacks has always been a place for opinions. Is yours valid? You bet. Do I like it when someone conflates their opinion with every other reader? Not really. Am I going to run a really positive letter right after yours? Absolutely!

Before that, though... one joke: "Would printing your letter be spectacular enough to get you to stay? Because we're doing that!"

All joking aside... I sometimes come off as flippant in the letters columns because I'm trying to make these things entertaining. I regret that it sometimes can make it seem like I don't care. I DO. I could argue with you all day that this story is not repetitious. Have they fought the Saviors before? Sure. Was Negan with them when they did? No. BAM! Different story. But you're more than welcome to disagree. If you hate the book, you hate the book. One thing that does bug me... everyone who suddenly has a complaint always says I'm being lazy, or I don't care anymore... and that does bug me, because that couldn't be further from the truth. What if I just suck? What if I've been trying REALLY HARD and this is the ABSOLUTE BEST I can do? Have you ever thought about that? Have you?! I'm not saying it is that, I desperately hope it isn't... but y'know... there's only so many possibilities... Thanks for writing, Adam!

The Walking Dead is the first comic that I have ever read. I read it after watching 6 seasons of the show. I have never been disappointed in either the comic or the show. You ROCK!

I love how you can read the comics and sort of know what's going to happen next, but also you don't follow the comic to the T, so the differences and surprises are awesome.

As a 37 year old woman, I can't tell you how much I love TWD. When I watch it, I see the family dynamic that has been created out of a world of turmoil. If a ZA were to ever happen, being with your family is how you survive. No matter how that family is created.

My kids can't wait to watch the show, but they are a bit too young right now. I want my daughter to see how badass Michonne is. She's like a modern day Pam Grier.

I was hoping someone on the Internet had already comped an image of Pam Grier as Michonne, or drew a pic of it, but no luck. Would LOVE to see one, though...

I have watched the show 3 times now. Every time I watch it, I find something new that I didn't notice before. I'm always amazed that I missed things.

No matter what the haters say, I will be with the TWD until the end. Keep up the FANTASTIC work. I can't wait until the second half of season 7 or the next comic.

A sincerely loyal fan!
Cicily Pope

BAAAAMMMMMM! Another satisfied customer. It's incredibly gratifying to hear that this is the first comic you have ever read. Thanks for your support.

Robert and Sean,

We need a map.
The Hilltop is burning, and the Whisperers are returning to camp. I keep wanting to turn to the inside cover to see how far they are from Alexandria, and where all the other groups are.

I bet Charlie could draw a beautiful map.

The story keeps getting better and better,
Matt Grillo
Springfield, Massachusetts

I mostly ran this letter so Robert could yell at me, "Why haven't we made a map already?!" We've talked about it, we love maps. Maybe if we ever do another SURVIVOR'S GUIDE, that would be an awesome thing to include.

Yeah... map... we have talked about that for YEARS. SEAN.

Hey guys!

Thanks for keeping me excited every month for the next issue of TWD. Just finished #161 and I'm going stir crazy waiting for the conclusion to the Whisper Wars. I recently re-read all the earlier material and I have to say that the progression of Charlie Adlard's art blows my mind. Charlie Adlard, you bring an edginess to the comics that the show will never have. Your cover art is a big part of what keeps me buying single issues every month.

Keep cranking out the good shit, guys!

Bonnie
Golden, Colorado

We love Charlie. He gave up a career drawing maps to draw comics. True story.

Ha! Charlie is the best!

Hello team!

With New Frontier (episodes 1 and 2) being released, and seeing as how Clementine and Jesus end up crossing paths, can you give any details on the likely hood of Clementine showing up in the comic or the TV show? Obviously the characters in the comic book are not frozen in time when they are not being written about (could you imagine?) and the events between Clementine and Jesus could happen "off screen", but as you have said that New Frontier and the comic are around the same time frame, it seems if there were a time to introduce her (in the comic) it would be soon. A reappearing character would be nice, (fingers crossed!!) but even a single appearance would be amazing!

Thanks,
Matthew Friesen

Telltale's latest installment of their TWD game series, The New Frontier, occurs during the time jump after TWD #126. So a lot could happen before she ever appeared. And that's not me being coy. I have no idea... yet. It takes time to write those things.

Dear Kirkman & Sean

I am writing this in science class. I am a thirteen year old and I just read the whole walking dead comic in a month. I will tell you right now, the amount of stress I had to hold in because everyone I know only watches the show was unbearable and very bad for my grades.

If it's a choice between bad grades and spoiling a TV show, spoil the damn show. And probably learn how to fight.

I was going to write about the whole series but I decided not to. I'm just going to go with the main stuff after Negan. First I think I remember you writing in letter hacks early on talking about how gaveling zombies that could throw there voice would be weird, but I might be wrong. I was also freaking out when you killed off Rosita and Ezekiel. I felt really sorry for Eugene. Also why would you have Carl do it with Lydia. He should be with Sofia.

Because sometimes teenagers confuse lust for love. And sometimes girls a couple years older can teach you a lot. And sometimes you just do it with different people before you end up with someone you love.

I also know that Negan's probably going to turn on them and Rick should not have trusted him. Also poor Lucille. Also now I have to wait a month for the next issue and it is really bugging me. I really do like the comic book and the show it was sad when Glenn was killed because I practically grew up with him.

Well I encourage you to keep working on the walking dead and I hope it never ends. You are a big inspiration to me and my cousin because we actually started to try and write a zombie apocalypse comic. I promise we won't try to steal your stuff. Your whole teach is awsome and deserves so much praise.

Scincerly
Matthew Schafer

P.S. sorry about the spelling and punctuation.

Matthew, please don't apologize. At 13 years old, your spelling and punctuation far exceeds a lot of what gets printed here. You're awesome. Just please start paying attention in science class.

Yes, always awesome to hear from the younger readers. Lines like "I grew up with Glenn" will always be cool to hear, despite how old they make me feel. Good to hear you're inspired. Never stop writing! Stories of your own, or letters to us. Do both!

Hey, and if you've read THIS far, you should know that you don't have to wait the customary month to read our next issue. Oh, no, no, no... TWO WEEKS from now, 2/15, the day after you've shamelessly debased yourself on Valentine's Day, #164 will be in stores! And since we're proud to help celebrate Image's 25th Anniversary this month, there will be an alternate cover by Ryan (INVINCIBLE) Ottley and Nathan (also INVINCIBLE) Fairbairn, homaging my original Image love, WildC.A.T.s! We never stopped loving Jim Lee, even after the affair was over. Peace!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Yes, these Image tribute covers for the month of February are just the raddest things ever. Also, it's fun to be putting out two issues in one month--wish we could do it more often (but seriously, we can't, don't ask).

-Robert Kirkman

While you're here, please check out the preview for Skybound's newest comic, EXTREMITY! It's a beautiful and crazy comic about a young woman named Thea, who seeks revenge on the clan that ruined her family. It comes out March 1st, so if you like it, please tell your local retailer you want one!

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

While the horde overwhelms Alexandria, let's give it up to the year's first candidates for Most Unlikely Couple of 2017: Rick & Negan! Not many tropes in comics bring me joy like the good guy and the bad guy teaming up, and these two have a lot to unpack. Stay tuned!

Oh yes, TWD is back on AMC by now for the second half of Season 7. Good times! You can catch me on Talking Dead weekly, where I'm played by Chris Hardwick.

Nice one, Sean!

I hope you are all excited about Rick and Negan (seemingly) being allies! Let's answer some mail!

Kirkman,

Thank you for replying to my letter hack... I didn't expect you to reply and I am kind of embarrassed and I came across the wrong way and dramatic. When I wrote that letter hack I was in a bad mood because of people in articles and posts saying Jesus will be straight because they changed his last name and using that as an excuse to change one of his many important aspects: his sexual orientation. That was what I was saying. To me changing his sexuality especially or anything is a slap in the face. In any way not just the last name. Understand? I am the worst at comparisons!

Completely understand and agree. I'm an old man so I don't remember all the details of the previous email, and I'm also lazy, so I'm not going to dig it up. But if I was coy before... I'll be less so now, Jesus is gay on the TV show as well.

I mean, Tom Payne is so adorable it'd be a real waste to make him straight! Although in real life, he IS straight... such a waste, am I right?!

For the record I am gay (as I am sure I said in my letter hack before) so Jesus' sexuality is very important to me. He's awesome, but he isn't defined by his sexual orientation and he isn't full of stereotypes/tropes.

Many won't understand and I have had a lot to deal with, I was formally self hating (for being gay) and Jesus is the reason I opened my eyes because he totally kicks ass and isn't ashamed to be gay! So I look up to him a lot and I am not the only Jesus fan who has this attachment. One of my closest friends I met online is going through a similar situation as well. Your characters are very important to people. Gay (LGBT), POC, are all important. Representation matters!

Does this make sense? Sorry for being an idiot.

- Danny

Would never consider you to be an idiot! I completely understand this. It's quite touching to hear how important Jesus is to you and others. It's always great to hear this kind of feedback. You hear constantly from people online complaining about LGBTQ characters on TV with that famous "How do I explain this to my kids?" line. As a father of a two young kids, I'm very proud of the fact that my children have been aware of the LGBTQ community since they were 3 or 4. It's very easy to say, "Some people love members of the opposite sex, some people love members of the same sex." My children see "gay" as a descriptor on par with "tall". There is no negative connotation to it, it's just a trait a person can have, nothing more.

If you're reading this and you feel differently than that, please take a moment to consider if you'd enjoy living in a world where "tall" and "short" people were something you didn't want your kids to be aware of. Recognize how strange and wrong that would be.

And then... read the rest of this letters column, because y'know, why stop now? Sorry to step on a soapbox there for a moment.

Greetings and Salutations Lord Kirkman and The Sean-Meister

First time writer here and 162 was AWESOME! I collect Charlie's original art pages and 162 was so good that I immediately messaged his agent to buy page 1 of this awesome issue. I am a major Negan fan and I absolutely had to have the funeral page for Lucille. I unfortunately missed out on getting her "death" page.

While the Whisperer War hasn't been as deadly as I expected (Bye Gabriel. We had forgotten you were still around), I am expecting a major character death in 163 or 164. Seems just like you to tease this massive war that changes everything and then make the big death come in the issue immediately after the War ends. Just as readers breathe a sigh of relief that their favorite character survived the war, bam (It better not be Negan).

I spent the earlier part of 2016 collecting all of the first prints of the original single issues and then rereading them at a speed of 2 issues per day. Such a great story.

The Megabox was awesome by the way. Before it was announced to be Negan centric, I was really hoping the variant book was not another #1 or #100 but it came out very cool! I have always wondered why they keep using those two issues for special variants. I would like to see a cool variant of #19 or #27 in the future.

For those of you that don't know what The MegaBox is, it's a new quarterly subscription box from Skybound. Every box contains a 5" McFarlane action figure, an exclusive comic, a t-shirt, an enamel pin and a bunch of extras. Since you were expecting some entertaining answers this letters page and instead had to settle for a sales pitch... I'll give you some exclusive info. The Spring edition contains maybe my favorite action figure we've done so far, 4 (!) comic books and lots of other cool stuff.

A trio of questions for you:

1. Are cars completely gone from the world? I am imagining what was left of the gasoline was used up during the time jump.

That's the idea, yeah. Cars are still around, but they're kind of useless.

2. Will we ever see the Cutting Room Floor book? Tired of this question? Too bad. The book sounds awesome and I want it!

Maybe never at this point. Sorry to disappoint. That way, if we ever do it, it'll just be a big surprise, and you'll be so happy you'll have forgotten we said it probably wasn't going to happen.

Never say never!

3. I absolutely adore the work of Charlie, Tony, and Robert. Would you ever consider a one off special where Tony and Charlie do an issue together?

That would be really awesome! But I fear we have lost Tony Moore to the world of fine art and illustration. Aside from the odd cover from time to time, you may never see another comic page from that genius. Would be cool, though!

Onward to a double dose in February!

Jeff
Memphis, TN

Comics by people who love comics! Two comics in one month! Woo!

Rick being 38 makes no sense.

At the beginning of the story Rick was 27 and Carl was 7. Yet in 162 Rick says he's 38 years old.

Rick's age has never been stated in the comic. It's true! Enough's revealed that you can figure out he was around 23 years old when he started getting serious with Lori... which invalidates your theory

because Rick can't have been 27 at the same time Carl was 7.

You even said in a Letter Hacks a while ago (after A New Beginning) Carl was about 13. When Lydia dumps him she even mentions that he's too young for her, after previously mentioning to Jesus that she's 16. And we know that the time between the end of All Out War and A New Beginning is roughly two years.

Robert and I disagree on many things, but maybe none more so than Carl's age. The irony there is that I know Carl is 7, like you all do, because Robert wrote he was 7 in issue 5. So long as Carl has never says how old he is post-time jump, you can just ignore what we say in the letters pages as made up shit. (Except for everything I just wrote.)

Officially, the time jump between 126 and 127 is not tied down to a specific number of years. It seems like around two, but could have been more.

Now, I know that back in the beginning, it was pretty much established that no one knew what the date was. I can see them losing a year, maybe two. But they think 11 years have passed since it all started? That seriously doesn't make any sense, guys.

-Ethan Tompkins

This is BY FAR the NERDIEST SHIT I have ever had to respond to, but it needs to be ON THE RECORD. I'm tired of living with the guilt of Carl's age by myself... unless we ever do a TWD: Special Edition and change Carl's age...and reveal Shane as Beta.

Bah! It's totally possible that Carl has aged five years since the beginning of the series. Kids age fast!

Hey Robert! Hey Sean! I love the comic (and I like the show okay), but there's a few things bugging me. Maybe you can clear them up.

1. The distance between communities. Alexandria was around for about 2 years before they came in contact with Hilltop, Kingdom, and Sanctuary. Heath and co were doing plenty of scavenging around the area and never saw them, so surely those communities must be far away. But it seems to vary. In some issues it's just an overnight drive from one to the other, while in other issues it seems to take days. Would you consider making a map? I'm really curious where these places are in relation to each other.

OK. WE GET IT. YOU WANT A MAP. But maybe Robert can give us some insight in the meantime...

I think some of the confusion is that the distance between communities was hard to traverse for many reasons before the time jump. During the time jump, the area between the communities has been cleaned up, cleared of wrecked cars and zombies, and

it's a much easier journey now.

2. Jesus's background. Will we ever find out how he came to be a ninja? I'm curious about that. He's an excellent fighter (and acrobat?) but I'm wondering about the how/why. It could just be a quick mention from him when characters talk about their pasts or something...

That is something we will get around to eventually.

3. Five thousand zombies. So we're about 5 or 6 years into the zombie apocalypse now. I'd think that by this point there's a lack of corpses. The living kill the living and they kill the dead. There's been a lot of eliminating over 6 years. So how are there still enough walkers for the Whisperers to amass such a horde?

There is not a lack of corpses. And the Whisperers have been gathering that mega herd for a very long time. Note that our people still steer clear from cities... they're still packed.

4. Robert, where's your Cutting Room Floor book? I pre-ordered it four years ago, and was really looking forward to it!

Ok, I'm officially just going to remove any reference to the Cutting Room Floor in the future. This is your advance warning.

Never say never!

Thanks for clearing things up for me,
Mike

I hope we didn't cause MORE confusion.

First off thanks very much for this whisperer war arc. Even though there hasn't been any really major fatalities I've really enjoyed it and the new panel layout made all the issues feel so dense and full of content.

Glad you enjoyed it. Sorry that so many people expect big fatalities when we do stories like that. If that's what we did every time, you'd expect it! People don't have to die in massive piles for a story to have impact!

Was this change in style made to specifically contrast it with All Out War where you used large splash pages for the action.

It was done for a number of reasons. To fit more story in the issues, to be able to show more things happening at once, since the events are rather chaotic. AND to make it stand apart from All Out War which was important to Charlie and me.

Here's my main question though. Dante is my new favorite character I think you've written him so well, he has so much charm and wit and I may be the only one but I'm really rooting for Maggie and Dante. They have good chemistry. I just really disliked Maggie saying that her entering a new relationship would somehow be disrespectful to Glenn.

Should I give up hope for MaggiexDante ? Has

that train left the station or can I keep hoping ?

Lou, Northern Ireland.

Never say never.

What's up Kirkman, This is my first letter hack so I hope I am doing this right...

I wanted to start off by saying I love your comic series (game/show too) and I love how diverse your characters are! Jesus is by far my favorite comic character! I even have a fan page for him. I am glad to see him in the game. I love him in the show as well, Tom really impressed me with how accurately he plays him. Although there are changes (last name, introduction, etc.) I still think Jesus is badass in any form he's in. I am excited to see how his story plays out in the show compared to the comic series.

I am also in the LGBT community so I love seeing LGBT characters. I feel like you do a great job with representation... especially since most of the time LGBT characters aren't represented accurately. (Note: I want a transgender character... I remember you saying that you would for a different series)

I hope the show includes a partner soon for Jesus (Alex?!!!!!!) I feel like we are getting closer to the point where he is introduced.

Lastly: when are we getting a Jesus backstory? I understand that it wouldn't fit the story right now since the whisperer war is ending and everything, plus it fits how mysterious he is... BUT We are all so curious though. I was thinking a backstory GAME! or a set of issues like Negan got.

Since "Here's Negan"(currently running in Image Plus) is ending in October 2017, seems like good timing for "Praise Jesus" or whatever you call it, right? You'd make Eric Stephenson a VERY happy man!

Now THERE'S an idea!

I hope this was okay for my first letter hack... and you don't cringe too much.

From, Mary (here come the mary and jesus jokes I get a lot)

No cringing done at all.

Hey guys,
So after reading issue 162 aka part 6 of the Whisperer War I've got a couple votes for you as follows:

+1 for the way Carl and Lydia's conversation juxtaposes Rick and Andrea's conversation. Carl seems to think that the sum of their experiences has put them in a good spot ("but we did them...the horrible things...to get here, to get to this life, with these people...where we don't have to do things like that anymore"). On the other hand, Rick's response to Andrea being okay with how things are now is "then what are we doing?". Beautiful.

Thanks.

-1 for the way how this issues ends the story arc. The war isn't over...the horde is right around the corner. Shouldn't the end of the Whisperer War contain the outcome of whatever is going to happen with the horde? I get cliffhangers but this seems more like an unresolved part of the story arc.

Hey, even is better than in the negative. I guess.

Stephen Pineros
Greenville, SC

That's a fine complaint to have, but just so you see my perspective... there aren't any Whisperers in these issues... so the war with the Whisperers is OVER... and this is how they ended it. As far as they're concerned... they won.

Dear Robert, Sean, and Crew,

This is my first time writing, even though I've been a fan of this comic for a while now, just over three years. I'm literally obsessed, it's all I do. I'd first like to state that the cliffhanger that came with issue 162 sent me flying to the ground, not out of frustration, but out of all the possibilities that were racing through my mind. Like if Alexandria was taken over, Rick could lose Andrea, they'd lose the bread mill, and Negan would never be able to live in that outpost!! Even though he deserves to live in one of those comfy houses.

Does he?

I do have a question. So Shane was big part of the comics in the first few issues, and he definitely meant a lot to Rick before and after the outbreak. So point being, with Negan trying to get closer to Rick, lets say he does, would Rick ever tell Negan about Shane? Or will Negan ever find out about Shane? I feel like that would be interesting for Negan to get to know Rick more, especially about Rick's past. The other way around would be cool too! —with Rick knowing Negan better.

Keep up the great work guys! Especially with Charlie's art!

Thanks!
-Joel Snell, Canada

This issue would've been a good opportunity to do that... but how much does Rick even think about Shane now? Three times a year? I feel like he got a lot of closure after he dug him up and shot him dead, and probably doesn't dwell on it that much these days.

Agreed. Maybe more than three times a year, but not so often he would have come up in the discussion this issue.

Where do I begin? My mother-in-law got me the three compendiums for Christmas this year and I just read all 162 (that horde though) issues in three weeks. I am emotionally exhausted but my mind is on fire and ready for more. Thank you for creating such a poignant story of these

survivors. It's helped me escape some of the vitriolic rhetoric from this past election cycle. I am LIVING for Rick and Andrea's relationship right now. What a gem. Also, how much more teasing of the Jesus/Aaron ship (Jesaron? Aaresus?? No?) are y'all gonna put us through before it turns into the love cruise we've all been waiting for? Again, thank you. These comics are, as you know, incredible.

Garan T.
Crossville, Alabama

Not enough gets said about Rick and Andrea's awesomeness. And she's a huge part of Rick living in the present and building a community, instead of dwelling on Shane, Lori and Judith.

Have we been teasing about Jesus and Aaron getting together? Hm?

Hello Robert and gang!

I read issue #162 last week and then I came back to it today. I'm not bitching but it just seemed to me that, what I thought was going to be the end of "The Whisperer War" is really not the end of it.....aside from them just walking off as if to say "fuck it, let someone else kick their ass" and that "someone" being the dead. Maybe I was hoping for a showdown between Rick and Beta at some point, I don't know.

Rick is not the action hero we once knew. That would NOT go well for him.

Anyway, I just have a couple questions so here you go:

1) Are we seeing Beta again soon or is it going to be a while?

I'll never tell.

2) Is Lydia trustworthy yet? I'm still not so sure.

I'll never tell.

By the way, I just got started on Invincible and I have read 1-24 so far. Really good stuff. It is so cool to read the letters and responses that are now over a decade old. Is it too late to say "banana split"?

Chris Crossont
Baltimore, MD

It's NEVER too late to say "banana split"! And it's also never too late to start reading INVINCIBLE! Everyone reading this--go out and start reading that book right now!

That just about does it. We'll be back in TWO weeks, for #165! Do Rick and Negan kiss in that one? Maybe. I ain't telling!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Man, I sure hope so!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

"We're survivors. We don't die."

-Andrea

I don't think Charlie and I have had a quicker reaction after reading a script than this one. That final image says all it needs to, so let's just get to these letters and recall sunnier days.

Yeah. Agreed. Letters!

Listen here, Kirkman, don't you dare kill Heath! He's one of my favorite characters and next issues cover has me scared. DONT DO ANYTHING TO HIM. PLEASE.

Lynn

Ok, looks like we'll settle for Andrea. HAPPY, Lynn?!

Or will we?

Hi Kirkman,

Let me make this quick. First of all I love the comics and the show. Second of all what's going to happen to Sophia? She nearly got beat up to death by some assholes and she lost her dad and adoptive dad. Does she still have feelings for Carl? That Lydia girl, I don't like her.

Well anyways, you should write an issue were Carl cheats on Lydia with Sophia. Then Lydia threatens to kill Sophia if she got closer to Carl. Sophia tells Carl but he doesn't believe her. Lydia keeps threatening her until Sophia gets tired and they get into a fight. At the end of the fight Lydia takes out her gun and shoots her in the stomach. Everyone heard the gunshot and Carl goes running to see if Lydia was ok. Then back to the fight, Lydia takes her knife out and is about to slit Sophia's throat when Carl sees what's going on and points at her head with a gun and then.....

Lydia cuts Sophia's neck like Rick did to Negan and after Carl shoots Lydia in the head. Sophia survives and ends up together with Carl.

Sincerely
Sofia

Sometimes you folks send in story ideas. This one was so bat-shit insane, never-going-to-happen that I wanted to share it with the world.

My favorite part about this one is that it's actually written by the fictional character Sophia... only she spelled her name wrong. Nice try, Sophia!

Kirkman,

Just read 163. Everyone still has plot armor. Yay...

Oh, really, Mike? You wrote too soon.

Heh.

- 1) Will Maggie ever find out Carl killed Ben?
- 2) Will Eugene ever find out who got Rosita pregnant?
- 3) Will Maggie ever find out that Rick is allowing Negan to run free?
- 4) Will Eugene ever tell anyone about Stephanie/Ohio?
- 5) Do you ever forget about certain plot lines and never resolve them?

Thanks, bye
Mike
Canada

- 1) ***You mean Andrea? She knows.***
- 2) ***Yes.***
- 3) ***Oh, yes.***
- 4) ***Definitely.***
- 5) ***Nope. Hasn't happened yet. It happened once in INVINCIBLE but it was so minor no one ever noticed.***

I actually screamed when Negan saved Rick. That to me proved he has changed and I am so fucking psyched!!! I was hoping for redemption, at least and wouldn't dare wish for a Rick and Negan team up. Now that I saw it happen in black and white, I can believe in wishing again! My friends thought I was crazy when I said Negan is the hero we all need. I know a lot of people will want savage Negan but I love the fact he's not an evil person. Maybe it's time to start wishing for a cross country trip for a small group with Carl and Negan. Ehh? EHHHHHHHH???

OGWalkers Represent!
Jay Musgrave

That doesn't erase all the evil shit Negan has done. His story is far from over, and maybe we'll see how much of a changed man he really is.

Indeed.

Dear Mr Kirkman & walking dead team

First off I am a huge fan of the entire series and I don't know what the people were talking about you being lazy in the other letter columns but I thought the story has just kept getting better but. I do have one question Why didnt Rick have anyone with guns ready to shoot the dead incase they broke it instead of absolutely everyone standing with knives and then running away?

Hosjes
Whalley, BC
Canada

They had guns. They put them aside to work with knives at the gate. The reason being the guns would draw more to the gate quicker. The reason they ran instead of taking out the guns and going to work is the same. They wanted to avoid drawing even more of the massive herd to that area.

Long time listener, first time caller...er, writer. Whatever.

Just finished #163 and I have to say it was EPIC!!! My question is, is there any possibility that Rick and Co. could come across a survivor that used to be a super-talented orthopedic surgeon that could fix Rick's leg? The reason I ask is I miss seeing Rick out on the front lines and kicking ass... Seriously. He's gonna have his hands full Making Alexandria Great Again (see what I did there?) and needs all the help he can get.

We've seen athletic Rick. I strongly feel this physical limitation makes him a better character. So it's here to stay!

A bit of criticism. I noticed that when Beta and his Whisperer goons led the ocean of the dead right towards Alexandria there were no barriers in place leading up to the Safe Zone. You would think they would have put up barriers to divert the dead around the community by now. Sure, they dug a shitty little trench, but come on, they've had years to figure this out so it wouldn't just be a straight shot for walker herds to wander right up to their gate. And why the hell did Rick, Negan, Siddiq, and whats-her-name just stand in front of the gate for the walkers to see? I don't get how the they all just lumbered past all the other buildings but just happened to stop in front of the Safe Zone and break their way in.

They didn't just lumber past the buildings. We just didn't show them slamming against them because it's not important, there aren't any characters in them. Once the Whisperers directed them at Alexandria, hitting that wall was inevitable. They didn't just go to the gate--we saw them at the gate because that's where the characters were--they were everywhere. They had

to stand there and try and kill the ones at the gate because they were worried the pressure would bring the gate down. They obviously didn't succeed. As for a larger, more complicated barrier system... they'd done a good job of tracking herds and keeping them from getting close. There was no need... until now!

Anyways, I absolutely LOVE everything TWD related. I am a yuuuge fan of the comics, novels, games, and show, if you couldn't already tell. When are you going to do a TWD movie? If you do one, I would rather have it be it's own original standalone story and not include the folks from the show. You could even make it a trilogy and it would be the absolute greatest motherfucking thing since Negan slapped barbed-wire around a Louisville Slugger and bashed a poor Asian kid's head in. Hell, it would be bigger than Star Wars. George Lucas would probably even cry. I want to see George Lucas cry.

Keep up the good work!

John Bailey
Spokane, WA

No plans for a movie as of yet. And it definitely would NOT be bigger than Star Wars, were it to ever happen.

P.S.: Is Overkill's The Walking Dead game ever going to be released? I've been waiting for years already!!!

No release date locked in yet, but Team Starbreeze is hard at work, designing characters, building maps and writing scripts. It's possible by E3 you'll get a solid update.

What I've seen so far looks amazing. It will definitely be worth the wait.

Ok, now we have three letters from fans who want to talk Rick's strategy in #163...

Dear mr. Kirkman & co,

I just finished reading issue #163. Awesome as ever but one thing bugs me: The survivors had years to make a safer and better place to live. They have a mill, use horses, we see patrols between the settlements, ... but still just one wall and one very crappy gate with no way to fall back if it falls.

Why didn't they go for a more medieval approach? More walls, a couple of gates, a maze between the gates to lure attackers into killing fields (attack from above, pitfalls, a big boulder to roll on the dead Indiana Jones style, ...). Hell, it's not the dark ages, they have explosions. We have seen the saviors use grenades. Why are their not explosives hidden on the road leading to Alexandria?

Greetings from a Belgian fan.
Wim

Again, the idea that someone would have a weaponized mega-herd was not something that could be anticipated. And they had systems in place to watch for herds in the area around the communities and managed them there so they never got close. No need for extra walls.

Just read issue 163. I know that the story is already written, but Rick made a big team of trying to stop them at the gates, he should have opened the gates right up. Line the street with cars to fill in the gaps between houses, and the lead the hoard (because this is much larger than a herd) right through town and lead them out the other side. Screw the whisperers right in the ear with that one. But of course, you guys already wrote the story. But that would have been smarter and more efficient. Just saying.

Cheers,

Tony

I feel like there's more potential for things to go wrong. AND there wasn't time to set up a plan like that before the herd arrived.

Dear Robert and TWD team:

How come Rick told Dwight that the whisperers are controlling a "sea" of roamers but failed to specify that it's a "sea" of THOUSANDS? Wouldn't wise ol' Mr. Grimes know that not relaying this info to D could lead to a predicament much like the one the survivors are in now?? When sharing my frustration about issue 162 online fans have responded with, "miscommunication does occur on this level and has in military history." I'm not disagreeing with their response I just would have expected more from Rick Grimes. Also, was there a moment in military history that inspired this miscommunication between Rick and Dwight??

BTW Conquered was AWESOME!

Thanks,
Colin M

Glad you liked it. There is no incident that inspired this error... but these things do happen. One man's herd is another man's mega-herd.

Kirkman,

This comic has been amazing. I have read since issue-

Nevermind, you probably read that message 1000 times before.

But it never gets old!

Anyways, I have a question about the zombies (or walkers). Why do they HAVE to bite and devour every living thing? I know it's basically a zombie RULE that they have to eat everything, but why? This might not get answered but hey, worth a shot huh?

Grayden Paradissis

For me, it's a primal urge that remains after death. They have a rudimentary understanding that they feel as though they're starving and they have a retained understanding of how to fix that. They do not feel "full" after eating... the urge never goes away.

Kirkman

Just a quick note that while you may have lost money on the individual issue of #163, my retailer, Dewey's Comic City in Madison New Jersey, gave issue #163 away for FREE!

How awesome is that?

Very awesome! And much appreciated!

You guys lower the issue price to .25 and retailers give the issue away. What a great promotion! Limit one per customer, while supplies last, can not be combined with any other offer.

Been with you since the beginning.

Keep it up.

Brandon Borzelli
Lebanon, NJ

This is one of the things we were hoping retailers would do. If one out of fifty people go on to buy a trade or become monthly readers, the store makes back its investment and then some. If you've still got some extra change in your pocket, try out our other 25-cent issues, INVINCIBLE #133 and OUTCAST #25, out now!

Yes, please do!

We'll see you next month with "No Surrender". Maybe watch AMC in the meantime! They haven't needed Andrea for over four seasons, and look how well they're doing!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Man, I sure hope so!

-Robert Kirkman

Turn the page for a preview of Skybound's newest comic, REDNECK! Will it do to vampires what TWD did to zombies? Check it out!

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I don't envy Rick right now. He's just killed the Saviors' leader...and now Andrea's arrived with some bad news. You'll have to wait at least a month to see how that goes... So let's just dive into these letters, where a whole mess of folks want to talk about the merits of Negan. (I'm very pro-Negan, by the way.)

Yeesh, Sean! You're just recapping the end of the book as an intro now? C'mon, you can do better than that! I mean, they can SEE what's right there on the left-hand page, y'know? Did the season 7 finale air before this ships? That's a big deal... really gets you jazzed for season 8, right? Which is going to be awesome!

Yeah yeah, the finale aired, but I'm just working on these comics, man. I have no idea what happened on the TV show! I have two weddings on opposite coasts by the time this issue hits stores (Congrats, Sung and Emily!). You know what? I'm not even going to defend the job I'm doing. Let's just hear your spiel and get on to the motherfucking letters for once!

And Fear The Walking Dead, which has next to no relation to the stories from this comic, but is still worth mentioning here just the same, will be starting its third season around the time of this issue shipping, so that's cool. I'm very excited about what we're doing this season. Cool stuff ahead.

So yeah, lots going on... including Andrea's current situation. MAN... where is THIS going?

Letters? Let's stop all this teasing and answer letters.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

This is my first letter. The main reason I think that Negan is being so good is because he wants to see Rick become a worse human being than he himself. I think he will even go so far as to protect Rick from the Saviors. Why? Because he wants to rub it in Rick's face and prove that his way of leadership was just. Rick has had a lot of close calls lately. I think that he might sacrifice someone he cares about to protect himself and Carl. Given this, I can see a possible outcome where Carl, Rick and Negan duke it out over control of leadership. It might be interesting to see Negan in charge and Rick in prison. A little role reversal. Thoughts on this?

Ken

Thanks for writing in! This is all interesting stuff. Negan definitely has a

motive, but it's possible that motive is just to prove that he has really changed his ways... we'll just have to wait and see.

P.S. I really enjoy reading Invincible!

It's awesome!

YES IT IS! Everyone should be reading INVINCIBLE!

Hey guys!

I want to start this letter by saying I've been a huge fan of this series for four years and I have only been disappointed a couple of times.

My only question is: will we ever have a lesbian character? As a young lesbian, it's hard to find well-written characters I can relate to, and after TV Denise died (seriously what the fuck), I decided to read this series again to distract myself from the unbearable pain and realized there are no girls like me. Carol's feelings for Lori weren't addressed properly and it made me really sad. I've always seen Sophia and Yumiko as lesbians, but it would be nice to get a confirmation. If none of your current female characters are gay, would you ever consider introducing new characters who happen to be lesbians? I really hope you decide to do that, as this is my favorite comic series and I would love to see this part of me in one of these characters.

Keep being awesome!

Daniela

Jeez... has there never been an official lesbian in this comic? Sorry, that's a huge embarrassing oversight on my part. I'd say it's a blind spot driven from my desire to avoid the "sweeps month women kissing for ratings" lesbian TV trope kind of stuff... but frankly, I kind of did just that kind of thing with Lori and Carol early in this series. I'll never be able to escape the fact that I'm a dumb white male writer. I do try to represent as many pieces of the diversity that make our world as great as possible in all my work, but I guess this is a big blind spot. Yuck. This will be remedied soon. Look at that, letters column progress.

Also, another good example of the show doing a better job than I've done with the comics. Now I can only hope Sean Mackiewicz can come in here and point out the major lesbian character that is slipping my mind.

Sorry, I'm not the federal government. No bailouts here.

Robert,

Negan likes Neil Young?! Holy shit! I didn't think I could like Negan's character anymore then I already did. That really put a smile on my face to read my favorite musician's name come out of Negan's mouth. What about you Robert? You a Neil Young fan?

Harvest, man! One of my favorite albums. (Who doesn't like Neil? Seriously?!)

LOVE Neil Young, myself. Also, every fictional character I've ever created is a huge fan of Neil Young. That's canon.

Negan and Rick, rocking in the free world. That pretty much sums it up. Their interaction and dialogue in issue 164 made up for the lack of action that I was expecting so I applaud you on that sir. I really enjoyed witnessing Siddiq and Annie stumble onto Eugene's radio equipment while hiding out in his house. Just when I was starting to hold it against you for not utilizing the storyline of the radio people more you bring it right back around. It's been great getting two issues in February, please do it more often.

Sincerely yours,

Fellow Neil Young fan Brad McTaggart of Fresno, CA.

Probably won't be doing more than one issue a month for a good long while. We're only human! Or, well... I am. Charlie is a machine!

I've never written in before, but I wanted to say something.

My friends gave me the first volume of the Walking Dead right after I was paralyzed almost three years ago. Having an issue every month gave me something to look forward to when there wasn't a lot I looked forward to anymore. There was always something happening with a cliffhanger, so there was always a reason to keep going at the hardest point in my life.

As an amputee who walked with a cane, Rick gave me a role model when I didn't have many. He showed that you don't have to be able to do a lot physically to be a leader and to make a difference. I was learning how to get in a car as a fucking adult, and it made me feel better to see what Rick could do.

I'm a kick-ass athlete now and I'm fine with my life and my wheelchair, and I still look forward to this comic every month. I just wanted to thank you guys for getting me through some really hard times.

Thanks,
Hallie S.

That's awesome... and humbling. Thank YOU!

Shit, Hallie, that's awesome to hear. Congrats to you for punching through and

becoming a kick-ass athlete. It's always great to hear stories like these. I've found inspiration for my life in fiction very often in the past, but it's always surprising to hear stories like these in response to this silly little zombie comic.

Kirkman,

Thanks for a great The Walking Dead Comic and now the "Here's Negan" back story in Image+. Reading both parallel now.

My questions are around Magna and company - can we expect more character development? Also, reflecting on her - we never got to see what was inside the horse drawn shipping container when she first arrived. Nuclear weapons or a year's supply of turtle wax? - still remains a box unopened - looks like they could use a Gatling Gun right now in issue 164-- if it was in there.

Lots of conjecture about Magna's arrival and now the turn of events landing in Sherry's corner as the new up and coming leader. Certainly, unexpected turn of events and lots of back story waiting to be told. How about a "Here's Magna".

Also as a fan - thanks for the 25 cent issue and the oversized nature of that issue. This fan appreciates your gesture. Congratulations on 25 years.

Doug
Canton, MA

Thanks, it's always fun to be able to do crazy things like an oversized, nearly FREE issue. Good to know they're appreciated.

As far as Magna goes... expect some development on her very soon. I know I've said it before, but it is coming. The shipping container they were on--well, just supplies, I think. It's not important now. So yeah... turtle wax and a gatling gun--but it's long gone now.

Hey Mr. Kirkman and Co.

I'll admit, my jimmies were a little rustled after reading the ending of 162. The cover had me hyped for some Andrea sniper action, as it's been too long since she's gotten a good kill streak going.

However, I have really enjoyed these past two issues. Rick and Negan's deep talk in the house this issue got me thinking, seeing as Negan is basically all the way on Rick's side at this point: Was this your idea with Negan from the beginning? Was having Dwight become a trusted lieutenant of Rick your idea from the beginning? If not, when did you decide otherwise for either?

Thanks, and keep up the fantastic work,
Cal Gunderson
Cincinnati, Ohio

Both of those stories developed as I wrote the characters. Dwight double-crossing Negan during "All Out War" sort of grew

organically as I wrote, and was not planned from the beginning. Negan was originally going to die in issue 108, so he'd have been in the book for... nine issues only. But I liked the character so much I just kept coming up with more for him to do.

I know fans seem to want to know things are planned out from the beginning because that makes things seem more well-written. It's hardly ever the case. Vince Gilligan has done writers a huge service by constantly talking about how Breaking Bad was a series of them setting up crazy future sequences, and then figuring out how to get to those moments. I plan a LOT on WALKING DEAD, I always know where I'm going... but having the freedom to change your mind and alter stories you have planned, honestly... it just makes things better. I'm certainly not just making the story up as I go along... but the times where writing gets dangerous, and you change your mind and do something new, and you have to figure out in the moment how to make it work... well, that's when writing is the most fun and rewarding, and I feel, more often than not, it makes the stories BETTER.

Ohhhh no you don't. I see what's going on here....the ol' humanize Negan trick..the "make us glad that he's not dead because he is so much more fun alive" routine...Negan and Rick bromance beginning....all s#its and giggles untilBlam...outta nowhere Carl kills Negan.

Ah the heck with it, I'm along for the ride anyway.

Keep up the great work.

Joe Carola

You folks have ALWAYS thought that Carl is going to kill Negan. And for that very reason, I'd bet against it. (Who said Negan's dying anyways? You folks have been saying he was going to die soon since he showed up 66 issues ago!)

Yeah, guys... there are so many other deaths on the horizon you have no clue are coming. Keep focusing on Negan... heh.

Dear Mr Sean and Kirkman (Sean was put first for once),

I'm stepping aside from talking about the main comics and going back to "The Walking Dead: The Alien", what's going on with the whole story? We know the fate about Rick's little brother but what about the girl? Claudia, isn't it? Will there be a spin off story about her? Or will she ever appear in the main story, because we as fans NEED to know if she's able to get the "message" back to Richie.

Thank you.

-Brandon T.
Toronto, Canada

As soon as BKV wants to tell that story, we'd be delighted to have him tell it. They

only have one more issue of Barrier to do, and then what are they going to work on next?

Yes. PLEASE... Brian and Marcos are welcome to do that any time. I want to know what happens next with Claudia, too!

I gotta be honest, Mr. K. I thought Issue #163 was underwhelming, being the 25th anniversary issue. I decided not to buy more issues after that and instead wait for the next compendium to come out. (When will that happen? Hopefully this year?)

THIS YEAR?! >choking down confusion/rage/indignation<

(deep breaths)

(some more deep breaths)

Ok... whew... We actually get asked when the next compendium is coming out A LOT at conventions. It's been asked continuously since Compendium 2 was published. (Sean, why are you about to break it down for the folks who read TWD month in, month out? Because.) Compendium 4 will collect TWD #145-192... so we're not even halfway there yet. If we publish one issue a month, #192 will come out in June 2019... so Compendium 4 would come out that fall in time for Season fucking 10 of the AMC show.

(MORE deep breaths)

But... when does Compendium 5 come out?! And what does it collect? Seriously, Sean... do that math... when's it in stores and what season of the show (if it's still around) does that coincide with?

Compendium 5 collects TWD #193-240. At one issue a month, yada yada, it will come out October 2023 to coincide with Season 14. If society holds up that long...

Then I saw somebody claim that Issue #164 rivaled Issue #100 in greatness. So I walked six blocks to my local comic shop and picked up #164, plus a copy with its awesome Wildcats variant cover.

Well, I just finished reading #164. Everybody was right -- DAMN, what a great issue! So great to see the entire ensemble in one issue: Carl taking charge at Hilltop; Eugene and Heath's talk about usefulness; Andrea, Michonne, Maggie. Most of all, I'm loving this dynamic between Rick and Negan. I love that rumination about the expense of being alive, the toll of living. This was easily one of Negan's most powerful monologues, fucks and all.

I guess I don't have a question. I just wanted to say thanks for continually reviving my love for this story. Keep up the great work!

Xo,
kjs
Pasadena, CA

I knew you weren't going to wait two years for more TWD.

HA! Just when I thought they were out-- we pulled them back in! Sweet!

I'm a longtime, hardcore fan of both the comic and the TV show. I'm sorry, but I absolutely hate this whole 'redemption of Negan' bs and it's ruining the comic for me. I just can't see myself sticking with the show if it goes the same way.

He bashed Glenn's head in, gleefully - not some random, minor character we didn't give a shit about, Glenn.

I forget... who's Glenn?

Not cool, Sean. Not cool.

He tortured Rick and his people without remorse, and we suffered along with them. And now we're supposed to find it believable that after a couple years in a cell, he wants to be a good guy and Rick and his people are just going to forgive and accept the asshole who tormented them and beat their friends to death in front of them? C'mon.

It already felt painfully contrived for Rick to keep Negan alive in the first place, but having him let Negan go free after only two years? Nothing about that seems authentic or believable, given what we've seen Negan do to Rick's friends.

Turning our awesome hero Rick into a weak, crippled old man just so you can make Negan look like a hero feels like the death knell of the universe we've cared about for so long. It's all awkward enough in the comic, but having to watch it in live action on the tv show would be awful. We watched Negan torture and murder people we care about, and we need to see him die for it. He doesn't need to be redeemed and he sure as hell doesn't need to be the new leader.

Negan was a great villain, but it seems like you got too attached to him and couldn't let him go when his arc was done, and now you're trying to make him someone else entirely just to keep him around. Now he - and the whole story - feels forced and artificial.

Hunter Ryan
New York NY

It's possible that you're right, but I obviously disagree or I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. That said... you don't know what Negan is up to... and you don't know what Rick is up to. I wouldn't say these two are actually friends, despite whatever Negan says. It's a complicated relationship. If I'm not accurately portraying it as complicated as I mean for it to be, that's on me. I promise it's going somewhere interesting, so if you DO stick it out to see where it's going, I appreciate it and I think you'll be rewarded. But isn't that always the hope of the writer?

Hi, Folks - I've a quick story to tell. About an act of kindness, about an act of integrity, about the character of at least one Walking Dead fan. Two days ago, I received a package in the mail from someone named Travis

Carr of Valley Center, California. I was not expecting it and had no idea who this fellow was. Around lunch time, I got around to opening it, curious why I was receiving it, skeptical that it was going to be junk mail designed to look like real mail.

In the package was another thinner package, white. I slid out an unopened mailer from Image Direct with my copy of Walking Dead #163 in it (!!!) along with a handwritten note from Mr. Carr:

Hi Arthur,

The post office delivered this to my house in Valley Center. Guess we're the 2 people in SD who get mailed copies ? Tried to get it back to you as quick as possible. I know ... the wait is real!

Anyways, Enjoy!

Sincerely,
Travis Carr

What an amazing act of kindness, right!?!?! After the the ending of Part 6 of the Whisperer War, I was getting antsy waiting for this issue. Only a real Walking Dead fan would understand what a pure act of kindness and compassion Mr. Carr's mailing the issue to me is. But more, I want to recognize the goodness and integrity, follow-through and camaraderie that this act represents. There seems to be a dearth of core character in so many people. Selfishness, laziness and a lack of responsibility for each other seem the norm. For me, a significant part of Walking Dead's greatness is that it explores these subjects in the context of a post-apocalyptic world where sometimes little but strong character matter at all. Mr. Carr has provided a shining example of the presence of what is good in human character without having to face an apocalypse for them to surface. Thank you, Mr. Carr!!! You, my friend, are a good man!!!

Anyway, my belief in Goodness has been stoked. And my commitment to this title has been reinforced. I'd like to think all Walking Dead readers are as cool as this fellow Travis Carr.

Art Shingler

Sounds like you owe Travis a beer! What a great letter to go out on.

Do you guys live in the same area? Get together! Eat some nachos! I want you two to be friends! Update us, Travis and Art! I want to know where this goes! There's a new Fast and the Furious movie coming out--go see that together!

THE WALKING DEAD #167 is entitled "A Certain Doom". It hits stores May 3rd. See you then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

I'm going to be completely honest... here... the next issue is going to be a big deal. I know that sounds like hype... but y'know... I have the inside scoop.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey everyone, Robert here. I wanted to start off this letters column with a little praise for a very special human being, your friend and mine Charlie Adlard. Last issue was special for a lot of reasons. Mainly because it was a big send-off for a character we know and love (and still miss). I didn't want to clutter up that moment with this story, so I saved it for this issue. You see, I knew I wanted to do a big issue saying farewell to Andrea in a way we've never done for any character before. Usually deaths just happen, and we move on. Often times that's abrupt and unexpected, and that's good and how it should be... but after 167 issues... and when it's a character who is as beloved as Andrea, you have to change things up, do something that matters.

But I didn't PLAN on it being 44 pages long, which is the same length as TWO issues.

I had it plotted out to fit in one issue, and as I sat down to write the issue... I knew I needed more space. On any other comic series, it would have been IMPOSSIBLE to just suddenly decide to make a book double-sized. It would never work, it would blow up the schedule for a year. You'd never gain that time back and the double-sized issue would come out LATE.

We haven't shipped a late issue of this series in YEARS. Because of Charlie Adlard. When I started writing last issue... we were ahead of schedule, by at least a month, because of Charlie Adlard. So I knew this might be possible.

Also, as far as creative partners go, Charlie is among the best. He cares so much for this story and these characters, when I pitched him the idea of the longer issue, he didn't hesitate. He knew what the story needed, and he was ready to dive in and make it work.

Anyone who works in comics knows how INSANE this is. It shouldn't work. It should have never been possible... but it was, because of Charlie. I'll never be able to thank him enough for making it possible for me to be able

to tell this story as I see fit, with the knowledge that I can always rely on Charlie to make things work.

It's one thing to be an amazing artist (Charlie is), it's another thing to care deeply for the work and have it show on every page (check again), it's unheard of to have someone with both of those traits and actually be able to do work on time, all the time.

Issue 163 was oversized--and we did 64 pages of HERE'S NEGAN backstory this year, in addition to putting out 13 or 14 issues in a year's time. It's just absolutely nuts. Charlie makes it work, and he makes it seem effortless.

It'd also be negligent of me to not mention Stefano Gaudiano as well. Stefano has now been inking the book for (holy crap) over 50 issues! Man, time sure flies by. Over that time, he's become a more than welcome member of the WALKING DEAD team. Doubling his workload in a month--also insane, and he, like Charlie, pulled it off without skipping a beat.

Also, Cliff Rathburn.

I'm just so thankful to be working with such an awesome artistic team. Shout out to everyone involved!

Sean Mackiewicz on the other hand, does literally nothing on this book. You suck, Sean!

I may suck, but I also make schedules that don't suck. Your letters, dear readers, are the only light in my life at this very moment. Let's see what you have to say.

Oh snap!

What an issue! Wonder how hard it's gonna be for Rick to convince the saviors that Sherry attacked him first. Doesn't seem like being slapped and choked a bit will leave a lot of marks that prove his life was actually in danger, and plus Rick was the one so anxious to get her alone for a "talk."

Rick's a good man and just owned up to what happened. Might have turned

out differently if Negan wasn't there to break down the Saviors' psychology... but thank the Lord for Negan! How times have changed!

What I'm really writing about is a letter hacks question from last issue. Robert, you had stated that Andrea found out about Carl killing Ben, but I am quite sure in an older letter hacks you told someone else that she didn't know, and I think you may have even said something along the lines of it would be a fairly big deal when she did find out. The reason I'm writing to you about it an issue later is because I've been searching through about 70 issues of older letter hacks trying to find my proof, but have come up empty. But, y'know, I'm pretty sure man.

I think you're wrong. Also, Letter Hacks doesn't really count as continuity. I'm allowed to be wrong here. And I lie here from time to time. There, I said it.

I mostly just really wondered how or if that would've changed their relationship when she found out, but it certainly appears there's not much time left for Andrea to hold many grudges. I sure hope that I'm wrong there!

Keep on churning out the awesomeness,

Mark Jackson
Deer Park, Tx

I think you should read our next issue.

Robert, Robert, Robert...

I enjoyed the shit out of issue 166, but how the hell did we not get a confrontation or at the very least a conversation between Carl and Negan? Carl isn't aware that Negan is out of the cell before getting back to Alexandria. Negan is literally standing right next to Rick when Carl and Rick are reunited. What the fuck? Total missed opportunity. If you overlooked it, fair enough, but for the love of God please have Maggie lose her shit when she realizes Negan is free.

You see that look she gave this issue? Did you see that LOOK?

Everyone will be dealing with Negan being out soon enough.

I honestly thought it was a possibility that Andrea had just been grazed on the neck by a stray bullet. Magna was firing in their general direction afterall. How did Andrea not know she was bit when it happened? It appears that she doesn't realize it until after she's already on the horse with Eugene. The fact that it happened off panel also added to my suspicion of misdirection,

but the last few panels of issue 166 pretty much confirm she's been bitten... or do they?

Brad McTaggart of Fresno, CA

Well, you certainly know the answer now! Bad wounds can cause a person to go into shock and not even feel them. That's what happened here. She was so focused on saving Eugene that she never had a moment to feel the pain of the bite.

Hey Guys!

I really hope you bring on lesbian / bisexual characters in the comics! The way the show treats their gay men/lesbian characters -- especially lesbians is very... ugh! Which is why I prefer the comics you don't shy away from homosexuality. Plus the comic version of Jesus is A+ fantastic.

It is refreshing to know you value what your LGBT fans have to say and how you know how important representation is.

Another thing: Please give us a backstory for Jesus soon! He is my favorite dude and I love him way more in the comics. I am thinking he was in the military because of his skill and his personality traits makes me believe so.

I also hope to learn more about Alex as a character.

- Harlow

Now is a good time to mention that we did a special variant cover to celebrate Pride Month. Why's it special? Because former TWD editor Sina Grace drew it! Sina! There's no getting rid of him, and besides, we wouldn't want to! Also, the very excellent Tamra Bonvillain colored it. If you always wanted to see a badass Jesus stab a walker with a Pride flag, well, you got your very specific wish!

Hopefully that cover makes up for the death of Denise!

No?

Okay... we'll keep trying!

Hi Guys,

I'm a huge fan of The Walking Dead Comics. I just want to express my thoughts regarding the current events.

-First of all, I really hope you guys wouldn't kill off Andrea. She's my top 1 character in the series. I believe Rick and Andrea are a power couple. They are both strong and

great leaders. I've read somewhere that Issue 167 will be a "big deal". I'm guessing for the best, maybe they will find a cure for the Zombie bite with the help of Eugene's Radio friend? If Andrea dies, I think I'm gonna cry.

We're sorry. Everybody hurts sometimes. Everybody cries.

-Next, I hope Negan won't betray Rick. I'm loving their bromance and chemistry and hoping they'd be great friends. Since Sherry's dead, I'm guessing Negan will once again take over the Savivors to keep them from doing anything Rick would not like.

Not exactly. I can't see Rick allowing this to happen, if that's even what Negan really wanted.

-Then lastly, I'm sure you're cooking up something big and interesting for Magna, I'm guessing that she will be Negan's new love interest? Or if Andrea dies (hoping not), she will be Rick's new girl.

I'll just go on record NOW and say that IF Rick gets a "new girl", it won't be for a LONG time.

Or is he lying? You'll never know!

Oh, and I think it will also be nice to see a romance between Jesus and Michonne. I know he's gay and Michonne's interested in black guys but, I just see the connection in both of them. I believe people's preference can change. I think they will make a good couple.

People's preference over time might change from skinny people to heavier ones ... or maybe even girls with long hair to those with rocking bald heads... but sexual preference? I don't think so. Not in this comic, at least.

Thank you,
Kevyn

Shit, Sean... does that mean I'm always going to be straight? Bummer. This sucks.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I've been a long time reader of the comics and watcher of the show. Not as long as most, I jumped in just before All Out War began during the season 4's break. I've loved every issue, every character, and I'm amazed at your ability to make me love a character I used to despise. Negan, of course.

I have a question about him, or rather a theory.

I've noticed, as many probably have, that

Negan has gravitated towards Carl ever since he first infiltrated Sanctuary. I've always wondered if there was a reason he's so attached, and it got me thinking. Is Negan sterile? The more I thought about it, the more things began to add up. He had his wives but never did one get pregnant, and there most likely aren't any unexpired forms of protection left at this point. So maybe he sees Carl as the son he could never have, but possibly always wanted; and maybe that's why he's so attached to him? I'd love to know if that's what you had in mind, or if I'm just being crazy. Maybe both.

It's an interesting theory. Maybe Negan just never planned on procreating. He's got a real hang-up about people dying because they're too weak... but Carl? That kid's proven time and time again that he's got a man-size nutsack, and has what it takes to thrive in this world. Someone like that is going to grab Negan's attention.

Also, thank you for the years of entertainment and gripping stories. You've been a big source of inspiration to me, and I hope one day I can publish a book that's even a quarter as good as The Walking Dead. I've yet to miss an issue since I jumped in, and I don't ever plan to.

Much love,
Corey

Aim higher! Write a better book. (It's not THAT hard, ask Brian K. Vaughan.)

Hey Robert,

What I love about TWD is that the characters act reasonable. Their decisions and actions make sense - and that's what makes a great story. I just finished #166 and one thing bothers me: Why did Eugene risk his (and Andreas) life in such a way? The herd was steered away and they had enough time to handle things safely. Did Eugene want to prove himself has hero or what was that about? Anyway it was time to kill another important person so I'm not complaining :-)

Sunny greetings from Germany
Frank Niedermann

Managing a herd is very tricky business. Eugene is the best at it. He knew if that herd starting to break apart, there weren't enough people there to get things back together. So that's why he did what he did. He knew that herd could easily go back Alexandria and kill more people.

Hello there!

Issue 166 was definitely a nice issue. I

REALLY hated Sherry's motive though. I honestly could not understand her plan. She sounded like she wanted to have the Saviors become the "big bad" again in 161, but now she just wants The Saviors to unlink? Maybe I'm just stupid to not understand.

I wouldn't say that. Hopefully it's just that earlier when she was making more vague comments, there was room for a lot of interpretation as to what her motive was. Or, I suck.

Other than that, I have a few questions that I thought would be interesting to ask:

1) What has been the laziest issue you've ever written for The Walking Dead? Maybe you HAVE put full effort into every issue, but which one do you feel you haven't put enough quality or story into?

Honestly? All of them. I try to put full effort in at all times, but I don't recall ever finishing an issue and thinking "Oh, yeah... I really kicked ass on that one." I live in a constant state of "Oh, shit, this issue sucks, I hope I can make the next one better." There are times when I'm convinced an issue just blows, and then those are the issues people like the most. I'm trying... I'm really trying. But this series and my whole career, honestly, has been a real lesson in never knowing exactly how an audience is going to react to things.

2) Here's Negan: 12 parts originally, now 16? Image Comics has a 25th Anniversary Blind Box and there's supposedly going to be a "Here's Negan #1" containing only 24 pages of the story (and to add, only 500 copies out of 1992?!) What I'm asking is: Will there be a full length Here's Negan for October when Season 8 starts ALL OUT WAR?

Yes. The complete Here's Negan will be collected this October, so don't worry about missing out. The Blind Box preview issue was just a fun add-in to a fun anniversary celebration.

3) Next big issue is 175, which is to release in January 2018 (if you're continuing to go monthly until then), so does that mean aliens?! A nice, sweet part 2 of where we left off from 75 would be nice!! Anyways, that's all I got.

Well, Ryan Ottley's looking for a new gig soon...

HMMMM... I am considering this.

Issue 167's looks scary, and Issue 168 doesn't look promising... #AndreaDiesWeRiot #KillJesusOffPlease #MulanSzechuanSauce

Thanks for Invincible (MOVIE!!!!)
Andy Gasal, proud OG+ Walker Member
Vermont

The riot must not have reached me yet...

Dear Robert and Sean,

I just reread All Out War in anticipation of season 8 of the show. That's going to make for some damn good television!

I agree!!

Anyways, I had a question about the climax. I've never been sure how to read Negan near the end after Rick drops his "rebuild civilization" monologue on him. Was he being facetious in his realization of Rick being right, and just happened to wait too long for his opportunity to sucker punch him? Or was that truly his turning point?

It was truly a turning point. I hope after you read Here's Negan, it's more clear that Negan was a guy who could hear that and see the error of his ways in that moment.

By the time A New Beginning starts, even though Negan is a psycho, he's not stupid enough to deny the fact that society is flourishing, and I'd say he actually does "believe in Rick Grimes". (Although, if and when this letter sees print, you'll probably have made me look like a dumbass there). But was Negan really won over by that speech right before having his neck slashed and breaking Rick's leg?

Peace,
Craig Fowler
Martinsburg, WV

Yep.

Hey Hacks,

So how many times will you try to kill Rick Grimes before you really do him in?

Juan Perez
Corpus Christi

Not fair! Everyone's in danger all the time!

At least a few more... maybe.

Ok, we're back in July with "Lines We Cross". See you then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh, man... so much planned for the next batch of issues... I think you gals and guys are in for a real treat.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

While you chew on the events of this issue, we're going to launch into your reactions to Andrea's death. There were so many heartfelt reactions to #167, it was hard to put this Letter Hacks together. Folks felt so strongly, the writer of maybe the best letter we received asked to not have it printed. So this one's a bit more cathartic than usual, a lot of first-timers wrote in, and I'm tempted to let these just stand for themselves. So let's just see how this goes.

Reading through the responses below, it's hard for me to reply as most of it would be "thanks" and "yeah, I feel it, too." So I'm going to let most of these letters speak for themselves and only chime in where it seems appropriate.

(Man, isn't this usually where we try to sell lunch boxes or something? This is so weird.)

"I had plenty of time to just not do it. I am in control of this story after all. But honestly, sometimes it feels like I'm not. This was one of those times."

You know, I was initially angry at you for pulling at everyone's heartstrings. As soon as I got to the last page of the panel, I was rage-flipping to see the Letter Hacks and see you there going "Ha! I told you it was going to be painful! Andrea's dead!" But instead, I found no sign of Letter Hacks, but your letter to us. That's when I realized it's not only us that's hurting, it's you as well.

Andrea has always been a character I looked up to because not only is she a great leader (most of the time even greater than Rick), but the fact that she's a completely badass woman, and you don't get to see that very often. So I thank you, Robert, for giving me the opportunity to grow with Andrea, month by month. It breaks me to see her go, but to remember that she died not for herself, but for the life of others, it truly resembles her character. It resembles the person she was always meant to be.

Thank you, Robert, for giving us Andrea. What a ride it has been.

Bianca, Philippines

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Crew

I am a huge fan of these comics, and I absolutely love everything about this amazing universe you have created. I have to say though...issue #167 hit hard. Not only was it a very well written issue, and a very well drawn one; you could almost read the emotion on Rick's face, so props to Charlie!...But it also hit home with me.

I recently lost my great grandmother in almost the same way. While she laid on her bed, dying from the cancer that filled her body, she did not fear death. She reassured everyone that she was okay with it, that dying is inevitable and only part of human nature. Seeing that in Andrea made me think of her. With that parallel aside, it was a kick ass issue! This has to be the saddest death since Glenn. Now we are down the three Atlanta survivors! (JUST DON'T KILL RICK!!!!) Thanks for reading this letter, and I hope to see it printed. Keep on kicking ass RK!

Matthew Garrett
Monterey, Tennessee.

A lot of people have died in this book.

People we loved, people we hated, people we didn't know anything about, people we knew more about than we know about people in our everyday lives. But I hope I speak for a great deal of your audience when I say that none have ever taken a bigger toll than losing Andrea.

But yet, I still agree that it did have to happen. She was one of my favorite and most beloved characters throughout the entire book, and certainly the most consistent. None were more level headed or no-nonsense than she was, and I don't think anyone ever will be. But yet, I still agree that it did have to happen. I'm not entirely sure that I can explain why, but it felt like it was the right time. Perhaps it was time to lose a major character, or maybe we just needed reminding that no one in this book is safe, as so many people kept forgetting during the whisperer war. But one thing I am absolutely sure of is that I wouldn't have wanted this book to end without reading the story that we read in this issue. And if Andrea never died, then we wouldn't have.

So thank you. If no one else thanks you for taking away one of the best characters in your book, let me say thank you for giving us a character that we loved like family, and thank you for giving us a story that celebrated her life as completely and appropriately as it deserved to be.

Thank you, Robert Kirkman

Mark Jackson,
Deer Park, TX

Dear Kirkman and Walking Dead Team,

Andrea has been one of my favorite characters in the entire Walking Dead universe for quite some time, and I just wanted to say that I think Issue #167 was a beautiful send-off for such a strong, important character. It was powerful and emotionally resonant, and the best possible

goodbye for her. That said, I am regretfully going to stop reading The Walking Dead. At least month to month.

See, I'm a bit conflicted about this. Walking Dead has always had ups and downs. All Out War was fantastic, but A New Beginning was, no offense, terrible. It can be slow and have fantastic character moments, or it can be slow and just struggle to grab my attention. It can be fast and action packed and awesome, but then it can be fast and action packed and kind of stupid. It's a lot of things, that's just part of The Walking Dead, but throughout it all, I've stuck with it because of the characters.

But then something happened. Jesus was the last new character I really cared about. After that, not a single new character managed to connect with me. Meanwhile, the old characters continued to die or fade into obscurity, and month by month, I had less connections to the characters, less reason to care about reading this series. I don't know what it is, Magna seems like she's got some potential and... there's uh.... that guy... Zachary? Is his name Zachary? Um... yeah.

And on top of this, characters like Heath and Aaron kind of slipped into the background. I'm sorry to say, but it seems to me that lately Walking Dead has handled its ensemble cast poorly.

But throughout all of this, Andrea was still there. And now, she's not. And while I think the series has been steadily improving, and as I've said I think #167 was the best possible death for her, I just find it harder to care about checking in month to month, especially when it seems to hurt the pacing of the story to me as opposed to reading the trades. There's still Rick I suppose, and Negan's redemption has been fascinating, but unless I suddenly find myself drawn in by the characters as I read the trades over the next few years, this is it for me reading the Walking Dead month to month.

Sincerely,
Lucas Albertson
Buffalo, NY

Well, if #167 does end up being your final issue, I couldn't think of a better issue to end on.

Sorry to hear about your dislike of recent issues. I wish I could boldly disagree with your assessment of new characters, but you're playing directly into my insecurities as a writer there. Sometimes I worry I'm not doing a good enough job digging deep enough with the new characters. Magna is a good example of this. There's been so much going on she just hasn't had the room to shine. I hope to remedy this in the coming issues. Wish me luck!

Regardless, I hope you enjoy the story more in collected form.

Hi Robert,

This is the first time I've ever submitted to Letter Hacks and it isn't done whimsically or without much thought. You have truly devastated me

with this latest issue and I thank you for it.

Andrea was one of my favourite characters and, as the weeks have gone by since #166, I have desperately hoped that this mysterious wound was a red-herring and would be revealed to be a stray bullet wound and not a bite - alas. You've reminded me that you absolutely do not fuck about with this comic, even if you want to desperately resist the tide and preserve certain characters like all of your readers want to. You portrayed this sudden death with a lot of sensitivity and, more importantly, accuracy, and was enormously cathartic for someone like me personally.

Thank you for granting us the relief and closure of this departure. Andrea will be missed.

All the best,

Calvin,
England, UK

Hey Robert, and (the infinitely funnier Sean),

!!!

First time writing in for me, I first began TWD by watching the tv show last fall. From there I was curious about reading the comics, as I like to compare the adapted versions with the story's source material. I binged 150 some issues in a week, and have been on the one-issue-a-month grind ever since.

Two things: first of all, I thought that issue 167 was superbly done. I bet you guys are getting a ton of mail after that one, but I just wanted to say that I really liked the overall tone, as well getting me to care even more about Andrea. The sense of closure felt perfect, like the ending of a movie, and marks a great half way point for the book (here's to 300 issues!!).

I also have a few questions:

1. You stated that Andrea didn't know about Carl killing Ben/Billy, and then later said that she did know... which one is it?

As revealed this issue, Carl told Andrea post-All Out War.

These letters columns are usually done on the fly. I will very often forget stories I have planned or things I've got in my notes. I have to refer to my notes a lot while I'm writing issues, but I don't do that for these columns. So I do forget things. Carl telling Andrea was something I had planned after All Out War, and it was something that was lost when I decided to do the time jump. And it took me this long to figure out an appropriate time to address it. I'm happy with the scene in this issue, and I hope you are, too.

2. Was Dwight's burnt face inspired by the Hound from Game of Thrones? Both are conflicted yet badass characters, so I was wondering if there's any connection.

No conscious connection, for sure. I think I just thought it'd be cool if Negan burned people's faces.

3. Negan has become my favourite character with his ridiculous one liners, keep him in the book for as long as possible!! Will Here's Negan ever be published as a standalone book?

Yes. HERE'S NEGAN will be published as a standalone hardcover this October.

Hope I make it to the hacks,
Aiden Duffy

You made it!

In the 11,189 panels of Walking Dead amazingness (thats the number, I did the math, you are welcome) I have to say panel 67 of issue 167 is definitely the best you have produced.

Did you double check it, though? Please write back when you're done to confirm.

Negan saying farewell to Andrea in that unique jolly-sociopathic Negan way was nothing short of comedic gold.

Bash Glenn's skull in with a bat, decapitate Ezekiel, even snuff out poor Andrea. But please, don't ever kill the foul-mouthed leather clad anti-hero you have in Negan.

He is officially my favorite fictional character. Apologies to Tony Soprano.

Keep up the great work.

Andrew
New York City.

I'm quite fond of Negan myself...

Dear the team behind The Walking Dead,

I wanna keep this short but no promises, guys. I will promise myself to not cry while writing this, though.

I started reading your fine comic when I heard about a character named Glenn dying in Issue 100. I was 10 at the time and had an older friend who introduced me to the show during Season 2, so I had some knowledge on Glenn, but having been late on reading resulted in the lack of me having the extraordinary reactions of those who were already reading before me. I didn't think much of the death, to be honest.

I didn't know if I had a local comic shop nearby, so I had to go on YouTube to watch the issues from 100-112. Shitty, I know, but I was 10-11 during that time, and I wasn't exactly making money, you follow me? I hope you can forgive me. I received the 12-Issue Hardcovers of from Issues 1-96 as gifts, so at least I was reading them legitimately, right? It wasn't until a few weeks before Issue 113 that I would be informed of local comic shop, so once that issue was out on shelves I bought it and read it. That was the first single issue I read in print on release day and it was amazing. The thing was... that was the issue where you tried to trick us that Andrea was going to die by falling off the tower. Even today, I still remember how I felt and my reaction to "Andrea" falling off the tower. Fast forward 54 issues later, and here we are... her death issue.

Now that was an issue where I can say I had the same reactions as everyone else, tearing and snotting all over the place. I also want to say that Charlie's artwork was so incredible this issue and is the exact reason why I aspire to become a comic book artist. I also want to say that the lack of Letter Hacks was completely worth for that eulogy you created for our recently departed Andrea. Thinking of the future without her now is unthinkable for me. Issue 168 and beyond will disprove this, but damn. I have been reading TWD every month consistently for nearly 4 years, and this issue was special; something I will never forget. I honestly cannot believe she is gone. I will forever keep Andrea in my mind and heart and I want to thank you for the flash of ass in Issue 98. That was nice ;) (I'm 15, I blame my hormones!)

#LongLiveAndrea

Thank you for not killing off Andrea back in 113. I will now reread the series and remember all of the Andrea moments we readers were lucky to have.

"People die. We're... people"

(Well, shit... I'm crying now)

Love you guys,
Andy Gasal, proud OG+ Walker member
Vermont, USA

"Thanks for that flash of ass."

Thank you for completely changing the tone of this letters column with one line, Andy. And for also reminding me how fucking old I'm getting.

Dear Robert,

Quick question: Why weren't Rick and Andrea ever married? They were together for well over two years and were perfect for each other. Father Gabriel could have officiated their wedding. In the apocalypse, you can't just wait for these things. I wanted to see Rick marry Andrea but now it's too late.

I also want to see Rick marry Michonne on the show. Especially if show Michonne meets the same fate as comic Andrea.

Bailey
Dublin, OH

Another scene I could have written... but y'know, my thought is that they just didn't feel the need for a ceremony to make it official. They felt like their bond was already as real as marriage.

Zombie Heads for Cannonballs!

The subject line basically covers it. I'm not sure if you used the idea of zombie heads as cannonballs that can be launched with a catapult, but I highly recommend the idea. You have full rights to use it.

Love the comic!

Jadyn.

Ok, we're back to business as usual. Love it!

Record time!

Dear Skybound Crew,

You just put out one of the better issues we have seen in a long time. In my opinion, Issue #167: "A Certain Doom" was great, not specifically because of the writing (although I am a fan of Robert Kirkman), but because of the excellent art and illustration. Coincidentally, this particular issue brought to mind an essay in the most recent issue of "Image plus". First off, I would like to digress for a moment and mention that "Image plus" is a great magazine and anyone who isn't aware of it should check it out. Okay, now back to the main point of my letter. In the back of "Image Plus", Declan Shalvey writes a very insightful essay about how writers are often attributed sole ownership of comic books and artists are sometimes overlooked for their contribution to the comic books that they help create. Do you at Skybound agree with the point Declan Shalvey is trying to make? If you do agree, should this be the case when comic books are such a visually centered medium? I do agree with Shalvey's statement because when you think of "The Walking Dead" my mind thinks of Robert Kirkman as the creator before anyone else. This contradiction is abundantly clear in issue #167 where the writing takes a backseat and the artwork tells the story of sadness and sorrow turning into strength and perseverance. The illustrations tell the story of the characters saying farewell to Andrea who has recently been bitten by a walker. We experience the love Rick and Carl have for Andrea, the pain they feel when she dies, and the strength the characters obtain from their solidarity during this time of loss.

John Gentile
Revere, MA

Ok, going to answer this as succinctly as possible, with as much nuance as possible, without going off the tracks (and that essay is widely available on ImageComics.com). Of course I (speaking for Skybound editorial) agree with Declan. When we discuss our books internally and externally, from development through publication, it's with the entire creative team as the focus. We'd be crazy not to. We love comics. We know how difficult they are to make. We respect the hell out of everyone that works on a Skybound title. Especially Charlie (see last issue's Letter Hacks for the most recent Adlard lovefest). There is no auteur theory at work here. The folks covering us (and comics, in general) don't understand that all the time. That sucks. When we see coverage that's guilty of that, we contact them to set the record straight; most of the time they accommodate us. The comics industry has exploded in the past decade and a half, attracting a whole new audience, so there's a learning curve.

But when we use the term "creator" here, it means a person who, legally speaking, created a comic book property. And legally speaking, Robert is the sole creator of THE WALKING DEAD property. So you're technically not wrong in thinking of Robert

as the creator of TWD... but yes, he and Charlie share authorship of the comic book 100%. That's indisputable. Which, I believe, was the point of Declan's essay: shared credit over authorship. But I do take issue when you say that the writing takes a backseat in #167. It's a partnership. When Negan has a wonderful turn of fucking phrase, you may notice the colorful words more, yet his expression is selling the personality behind it. Just as seeing Rick by Andrea's bedside is devastating without a single word needing to be said because Charlie is aces... and yet, that mood and intent was established through the script (and years of Kirkman/Adlard symbiosis). Comics! That's why we fucking love them. A story can only be told through collaboration... and, also, a patient editor.

To chime in here myself... and thanks for taking the bold and never needed stance of defending a writer, Sean (wink). You'd have to be insane not to see that artists are too often marginalized in this industry. It's a horrible thing that's taken root over the last twenty-five years or so. What's NOT talked about enough is that we got to this place due to the practices of the large publishers who saw more money in supporting writers who could do more books per month and more danger in giving artists power as they honestly, truly, at the end of the day, don't really need writers... or ANYONE ELSE to make comics. It's only been in recent years that Marvel and DC have actually let artists write stories again after years of blocking it.

It's also something I can't really blame the online press for, because it starts with those companies. Every time you see a collection with the writer's name printed FIVE TIMES the size of the artist's, or a series where the art team revolves to the point that you don't know who the lead is... it sets a tone. It tells everyone that the artist is less important, which couldn't be further from the truth.

We all know the colorist is the most important.

We'll be in San Diego a couple weeks from now for Comic-Con...an event that simulates the zombie apocalypse over the course of five days. People pay for that experience! (Come by, say hi. We have some totally badass TWD merch debuting... including a thing called "Shiva Force". SHIVA FORCE!!! And where we absolutely won't be selling Andrea commemorative lunch boxes!)

Then we're back in August for "On the Road" which has nothing to do with Jack Kerouac and everything to do with your boy Eugene.

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's gonna be great!! See you then! If you need me... I'll be panicking in preparation for Comic-Con.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

A long-standing TWD mystery answered?! Find out next issue!

In other TWD news... and there's a lot of it... *Fear TWD* just hit its midseason finale, and the TWD Season 8 trailer was revealed at Comic-Con (ALL OUT WAR!!!!). At E3 back in June, we also announced a new TWD VR game being developed with Skydance. I know I'm probably missing half a dozen things, so please check out the revamped Skybound.com for all the latest news.

There was also a trailer for THE WALKING DEAD: MARCH TO WAR that was recently released! That's the new mobile game from Disrupter Beam and Skybound! Do please visit skybound.com for all your Skybound dot news!

Now let's answer some mail!!

Can you kill Siddiq for using the radio?
Thanks!

Elvic

We may have found a better reason! Stay tuned.

Heh.

I don't write this to get printed. If you see this and want to reply (which is highly unlikely, but I still gotta try), don't waste Letter Hacks space on it, replying through email is ok.

What's the fun in that?!

Gonna get straight to the point. And it's not about you-know-what, but I want you to know, Robert, that I'm with you. Everything's gonna be ok, no matter what. It's not much, but here's my hand on your shoulder in a supportive way. Man, I suck at this.

So, gonna get straight to the point.

Oh, wait a minute. Sean, go get yourself some candy, you deserve it. If you give me your address, I'll actually mail you some. You can mail food, right? I have no idea. I'll try to, at least.

Hard pass, bro. Much to my dentist's dismay. (He actually told me I needed to eat MORE candy at my last visit. He's probably not even licensed, for all I know.)

Now, straight to the point. Robert, did you have much to do with Telltale's New Frontier? (Not putting spoiler alert here since this letter is not really for print and I imagine you guys at Skybound know what the game is about). I'm especially wondering about Jesus. Was Jesus in the game your idea? Did you help write him?

Telltale wanted to include Jesus in the game,

and we thought that'd be a good fit. We review scripts and episode builds as they're completed, and give notes throughout the entire process... mostly to make sure Jesus is acting like his comic book counterpart.

Did you write him hitting on Javi at the end? As a good roleplayer I had to not notice that and say something about his armor, but that still made my day. I mean, one of the coolest and badasses of the comic characters hitting on the protagonist of a game! I like Javi, I love Jesus, it's my OTP now! Just kidding, Javi is too straight for that and they don't even know each other so well. But still...

One of Telltale's writers wrote that (sorry, not sure exactly whose idea that was... there's a whole team of writers and producers and designers who create each season)... but yeah, we were conscious of that moment, which was made to present the player with the option of returning that sentiment or not. Not everyone liked it, so conversation to be continued below.

Also (that's for all of you guys, not just Robert), if you had time to play Telltale's games, I'd really like to hear about your choices.

Yours,
Art Kudryavtsev

I don't play the Telltale games traditionally since I see every step of development, and I'm too busy investing all my gaming time in *Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. All my family time, too. I should just go and kill Gannon already...

I'm glad I haven't opened my world to *Breath of the Wild*... this book would never get written. Watching my son play it is enough.

Hello Robert Kirkman,

We know you don't write for the tell-tale games, but I do know that the comic and games are linked. It was nice seeing Paul Monroe in *A New Frontier*. He was pretty much 100% accurate and it was nice seeing one of my favorite comic characters in video game format.

I just have one thing to say. I didn't like how they portrayed Jesus in that flirting scene in episode five. What offended me was that no matter what Jesus flirts with Javi. Even if you romance Kate. Which Jesus is aware of. Jesus has no idea that Javi was bisexual. It gives off that "gay men want every guy they meet" stereotype. It was very off to me and many others. I just don't appreciate how they made Jesus look so hypersexual. They exploited Jesus and made his attraction to men into a joke. It makes it look like he just wanted ass. Jesus isn't that kind of guy. I just feel like they heavily disrespected his character. He's supposed to break gay stereotypes. Of course there isn't anything wrong with flirting, but how they wrote it in the game gives off harmful

stereotypes. Makes people think Jesus only helped out Richmond because of Javi. It just isn't who Jesus is.

I hope this doesn't come across as me being a critical asshole, but I am just tired of gay men being portrayed that way especially since I don't get that vibe from him when I read your comics. It felt out of character. I just wanted to vent my frustration and I didn't know who else to contact. I figured I would write you since you created Paul Monroe and I remember after issue 122 you said in a letter hack along the lines off "Jesus is totally into dudes but not all dudes" and about gay men not wanting every guy they meet just as straight women don't want every guy they meet. This situation from the game isn't helping break the stereotypes he's been breaking.

-Micah & Sav

Hey, Micah and Sav, we were very conscious of how Jesus was portrayed throughout the season. We love Jesus, and to make him such a large part of this story, it was important we got him right. It wasn't our intent to make him a joke or horndog... and I honestly think we succeeded. He's still the ultra-competent badass from the comic. (See: climax of Episode 5 and his ride to the rescue.) The moment between him and Javi probably should have been dependent on whether Javi romances Kate or not... or could have been set up better in previous episodes... but ultimately we just wanted to give players an extra choice over whether Javi returns Jesus's flirtation. Sorry that moment didn't work for you.

I also apologize. It certainly wasn't our intention for that scene to be viewed that way. Also, funny to note, I think the Letter Hacks response you're referencing was to a fan asking if Jesus and Aaron would ever hook up... I guess Aaron grew on Jesus!

Hey Team,

just read #168 and laughed out loud at Negan's hilarious speech. "Magic foot-vagina"? Great. Robert was there anything you wanted to put into Negan's mouth but had to remove it because it was to rad? Let us know :)

Greetings
Frank Niedermann

He wrote "magic foot-vagina" and you think there's something he won't print? Shame on you, Frank Niedermann! Shame!

Yeah, honestly, I think the better question is, "How much time do you spend trying to punch up Negan's dialogue to make it grosser/weirder?"... the answer... A LOT. I also spend a lot of time thinking people are going to think I'm weird because of all the shit I come up with for Negan to say... I never let that hold me back... hence magic foot-vagina.

If you're brave... or sadistic... feel free to google "foot-vagina" next time you're at work. It only works if you're on a computer where the screen can be seen by a lot of co-workers. Weird, huh? Try it!

I just did. It's really a lot weirder and not as fun as you'd think. If you're under 18, it might screw you up for life.

Hi from down under!

This my first time writing. I just wanted to thank you for the awesome comics (keep up the good work!), and ask a few questions:

1. Sophia is my favourite character, because she's my age and she's super cool, and I was wondering if she'll become a more important part of the group?

I definitely need to do more with her, I agree. She had a prominent story for a while, I'll get back to her soon. Sorry, there's just so much going on!

This answer always translates in my head to "Gotta start killing more characters!"

2. Is there any chance that Sophia and Carl will date (a fight between Sophia and Lydia would be amazing!)?

Why do you want the girls to fight? The future of human civilization is at stake and you want a girl fight? Shame, Bella! Shame! (Sophia certainly has her fans. Once Father Gabriel was killed, everyone jumped on her bandwagon or something.)

3. Will Rick ever die?

Everyone dies eventually.

Thanks
-Bella :)

Thanks for writing in, Bella... but Sean's right... shame on you for asking for a girl fight! Girls need to cooperate!

See you in September, with the debut of Princess! Seriously. The issue is called "Fear the Princess". So many questions. Also, what the fuck, Saddiq?!

Also... shit... I almost forgot! On the following pages is a preview for a new Skybound comic—GASOLINA—that I created with artist Niko Walter, and joined by colorist Mat Lopes and TWD letterer Rus Wooton. It's the first comic I've ever written. I'd like to think it's at least as entertaining as your average Letter Hacks. I hope I'm not overselling it.

It's about two newlyweds who become unlikely leaders in the fight against a cartel waging a monstrous war in Mexico. It's a crime/horror/love story. It comes out September 20th. If you dig the preview on the following pages, please consider pre-ordering with your local comic store. That's the best way to support creators—and editors who want to do even more work after they've left the office. Thanks!

-Sean Mackiewicz

You're definitely NOT overselling it! It's a great book! And to shake things up, I'm EDITING IT!!! Not really, Arielle Basich is editing it... but we should have done that... that would have been hilarious! And a disaster... a hilarious disaster! You're in good hands with Arielle!

See you all back here next month for more WALKING DEAD goodness!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I wrote the opening sequence to this issue a few months ago. When I had them leaving deserted Pittsburgh, the hometown of George A. Romero and the setting of Night of the Living Dead and Dawn of the Dead... I just couldn't resist the idea of having Michonne turn around and reenact the memorable scene from the beginning of Day of the Dead. I thought introducing Princess in this way would really showcase just how important this new character will be. I even bought Day of the Dead on iTunes (about my ninth purchase of it) and watched it for the first time in a few years. To say these movies were an inspiration for what you're now reading the 171st issue of is an understatement. They're the true north of what I've done in this series. THE WALKING DEAD simply doesn't exist without George A. Romero doing his movies first.

I first encountered Night of the Living Dead on late-night network television. The Fox affiliate of the brand new fourth network channel in Lexington, Kentucky had airtime to fill, so they would run movies at night. One of those nights they ran Night of the Living Dead (followed by an ILLEGAL, I would later learn, airing of the Night of the Living Bread spoof). Watching Duane Jones get shot at the end of that movie blew my mind. The level of social commentary tucked effortlessly into that flawless horror film was awe-inducing, and is sadly still extremely relevant today. It took seeing Night of the Living Bread to allow my teenage mind to finally go to sleep.

I didn't see Dawn of the Dead or Day of the Dead until after I'd moved out of my house... they were some of the final VHS tapes I ever bought in my late teens. When most people my age were going to college, I was attending Romero night school. I watched those movies over and over and over. I was obsessed with them. At the same time I was doing BATTLE POPE followed by SUPERPATRIOT, and eventually I found myself pitching a new book to Image Comics almost every month... I desperately wanted to get away from doing superheroes, as that was mostly what I'd done up to that point. By then I'd done a deep dive into the many other movies that played around in Romero's sandbox, Lucio Fulci's Zombie being my favorite among them... so it occurred to me that no one had ever done a story that followed a group of survivors, like the group in the house in Night, or the people in the mall in Dawn, or those sad soldiers and scientists who found themselves locked in that bunker in Day... and followed them for YEARS in a continuing story. I've said in countless interviews that I wanted to do "a zombie movie that never ends."

I probably should have said "a Romero zombie movie that never ends."

I planned on writing about George this issue, talking about his influence on me and his effect on my career, and urging anyone reading this who hasn't devoured his work (he did SIX zombie movies ultimately and a ton of other great non-zombie movies like Martin, Monkey Shines, The Crazies and Bruiser) to run out immediately and do so. I wanted to thank him... as it's my love of his work that keeps me energized enough to write this book year after year. Unfortunately, on July 16th George passed away.

Unfortunately, I never got to meet him.

He walked by me once at Comic-Con and I almost stopped him... but in the end I couldn't build up the nerve to do so.

George has had a complicated relationship publicly with THE WALKING DEAD. It would be easy to assume he hated it and hated me, but the truth is he said once in an interview that he enjoyed the books. That was a big deal for me when it happened. It's just another one of those surreal moments of my life, hearing the inspiration for your work read and enjoyed it.

He's called the show a soap opera and said it wasn't for him (I'm paraphrasing here). I only bring that up because when I commented on his passing publicly, a few people responded negatively about him because of how he felt about a show they loved. I just want to try and dispel any of those feelings right now. THE WALKING DEAD is kind of a soap opera... his statement is largely accurate. But even if he'd said every form of THE WALKING DEAD was a steaming pile of shit... I would have still loved him and loved his work. He's more than earned the right to pass judgment on any form of zombie fiction. He's George A. Romero, the father of the modern zombie and horror master. There will never be another person who influences zombie horror as much as he did.

If you are a fan of THE WALKING DEAD, you are a fan of George A. Romero.

He will be missed.

-Robert Kirkman

Re. Andrea's death

Response: Enough of maudlin tone of the subsequent issues and letter hacks already. She's dead, she's gone, buh-bye, adios, and all that other saccharin BS. My reaction to all the fuss: Meh.

Ok, ok, the grieving period is officially over (except for the trade readers. Those folks

are in for a big surprise when Volume 28 hits this month).

HOWever, my response to the fact that Aaron has finally found Jesus? HALLELUJAH! Leviticus be damned. Shame I never got to hear those giant brass balls clanging together!

B. Hawkes
Nova Scotia, Canada
(proudly Trump-free)

I figured people would like that.

Hey Robert and Sean

I just read issue 169 and after Andrea's recent death I was wondering if Rick and Michonne would eventually become close like in the show. I also have questions on the one I just read, will Negan start another war against Rick after being driven away?

Can't see him starting a war with just a satchel of pork and beans, but more on Negan's solitary life in #174.

As for Rick and Michonne, as much as I LOVE that relationship in the show, there are no plans to mimic it in this series.

On the topic of wars with the groups, I also am unsure about the group Eugene was contacting. (This is completely off topic of this letter but my computer auto-corrected Negan to Vegan and Michonne to Microphone and it annoyed me.) I get a feeling that there will be a lot of conflict between many characters because of the Sherry situation, Negan being sent free, and I think there could be conflict between Sophia and Lydia. Both the comic and the show keep me wanting more, (I can't wait until season 8) keep it up!

-Myra

There's plenty of conflict on the horizon, don't you worry!

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Sean,

Long time reader here (almost ten years, woa!) and I've been wanting to do this letter for a long time. As a person with Asperger's, I am very glad you confirmed that Eugene is on the autism spectrum. Eugene is my hero and my inspiration and I've always suspected he was just like me. Whenever people say they don't like him or think he's cowardly, I always point to No Way Out when Eugene bravely charges into the melee saying that people will remember this and he can't sit out. I am also interested in the adventures he will have in Ohio, and his eventual meeting with Stephanie.

Eugene's grown to be one of my favorite characters, too. He really proved himself in All Out War and how much he transformed Alexandria in the aftermath. He won't be taking a backseat anytime soon.

My other favorite is Dwight. I admire how far he's come, and how important he is now. Here's hoping he gets over Sherry and notices cute Laura really quick.

Thanks to you guys and the whole Walking Dead team!

Cody Ball
King, NC

Thanks for writing, Cody! I can't comment on Dwight's future love life for fear of spoilers, but you may be onto something... or not.

Mr. Kirkman,

First off, love the Walking Dead. I will admit that the TV show brought me to the comic series, but as time has progressed, I have found that I enjoy the books more than the show.

It's not a contest! Find us however you can, and you don't have to choose between the TV show, the comic, or video game!

Now the reason for my letter. I have patiently been waiting to read in print Andrea's reaction when Carl confessed to killing Ben. What I wasn't prepared for was the floodgates to open up and that I would be crying 5 pages into the issue. Carl retelling the story was brilliant, and very well done. I know previous letter hacks have criticized the writing, but in my amateur opinion it is a well written story. Kudos to you Mr. Kirkman. Keep up the good work.

Paul K.
Hamburg, Pennsylvania

Wait... someone has been criticizing the writing?! And we've been printing those letters?! What the hell were we thinking?!

Hi Robert

I was just wondering if we could possibly see the girl from the walking dead the alien anytime soon?

Only if Brian K. Vaughan and Marcos Martin decide to come back and do another story with her! That is until I COMPLETELY sell out and do something against their wishes and turn those guys against me! Who knows what could happen. Although that probably won't happen

And also why hasn't rick ever mentioned family or attempted to find anyone he knows other than Lori and carl?

Thanks from Canada!
Nick

He's been pretty busy... and most people are dead, it'd be a huge risk to make a trip to find an aunt or an uncle without any evidence they're actually still alive.

Dear Kirkman and co,

I am a Christian, and as such I was initially appalled at Paul Monroe and his nickname. Since then, I've come to terms with his name however, and i think he might be one of the most original characters you have come up with. Believe it or not, despite my religion I thought making him homosexual made him all the more interesting. However, I am curious what made you decide to put a character into The Walking Dead that looked somewhat similar to Jesus Christ and give said character the nickname Jesus? I understand the reason the CHARACTERS call him Jesus, but what

caused YOU to put Jesus into The Walking Dead?

There wasn't any real motive behind it to be completely honest. As I recall I just wanted to have a name that was easy to remember, and I thought it would be cool to have a character named Jesus. So we went with it. Sorry there wasn't more thought put into it. There are tons of characters and people named Jesus, though... it's not just that one guy. Blame The Big Lebowski...

Then I also have an unrelated question. During All Out War when Heath lost his leg and Denise sacrificed her chance of survival for him, did you ever consider killing Heath off and having Denise be the armless doctor who lost her lover? I am glad you did what you did though, because Heath is my favorite character and every time I open an issue I hope he's a big part of it.

Sincerely, Connor

I thought it was more interesting to lose a doctor so then people in Alexandria would have to go to the Hilltop for medical care... but I never actually USED that in a story so... yeah, it was kind of pointless, but that was the idea behind it.

Hey guys!

After reading Issue 169, I must say that the shot of Andrea's tombstone reading "Andrea Grimes" was arguably more emotional to me than her actual death. Carl's story about how he came to call Andrea mom was absolutely gut-wrenching. I'm glad we finally found out how Andrea discovered the truth about Ben and Billy.

I can't help but ask, however, if that was the reason Andrea's last name was never revealed. Had you always intended for a moment like this with the character? Some emotional reveal of her last name? Whether it be with Rick, Dale, or whoever?

Anyways, though, keep up the awesome work, dudes.

Dalton Faulder
Jackson Center, OH

NO. I never gave Andrea a last name because I'm lazy. And I didn't even intend to have the gravestone say Andrea Grimes until after the art came in. The tombstone originally just read "ANDREA" and that's when I had the thought to put Grimes on there. That's a really good example of things just happening and a great moment coming out of it. If I'd taken the time to actually give her a last name, that's probably what it would have said, but saving that moment to reveal she'd taken Rick's last name... it was too good of an opportunity to pass up. Sometimes stories are planned in meticulous detail... and moments like that are built to for years... and sometimes the stars just align at the exact right moment.

Dear Letter Hacks,

NO! You done messed up, Robert!

You had the perfect opportunity to give us a Rick/Negan road trip, and you blew it! As I was reading through #169, I got to the point where Jesus said "No" to the road trip, and I realized

that this was the point where Rick would have to make the journey himself. I felt like you were further shoring up the possibility with the first half of his conversation with Dwight... and then BAM! Michonne had to come along and shut it all down.

How perfect would it have been to get that Rick & Negan dynamic for weeks on end (while Eugene rode along uneasily at their side)? You still could've had Dante tracking Negan for Maggie. It would've opened up an intriguing scenario with him spying on them as they met up with Stephanie and the Ohio crew.

But alas, it's not gonna happen. Too bad. Rick and Negan were such good counterparts. I'll miss seeing those two work off each other.

Rick is far too important to leave Alexandria, especially with Dwight hanging about, but this is a cool "what if".

A quick sidebar to your letters page from issue #169, Image already did that "artists as writers" things when it began. With some notable exceptions (e.g. some of Larsen's run on "Savage Dragon"), there was a lot of crap there.

I'm not saying that artists should never write their own stories, but don't sell yourself short. We've clawed our way free from the art-centric '90s and experienced some excellent comics due in large part to awesome writers such as yourself.

I don't think anyone's selling themselves short. We all just want to read good comics, no matter who makes them. If you're still not convinced, check out Daniel Warren Johnson's EXTREMITY, Andrew McLean's Headlopper, Sina Grace's Nothing to Lose... or even Skybound's latest comic, SLOTS, by Dan Panosian!

Then again, you DID just split up Negan & Rick. I bet Adlard wouldn't have done that...

Cheers,
Wesley Rice (amateur writer)

There is also Rock Candy Mountain by Kyle Starks & Shaolin Cowboy by Geoff Darrow (which I maybe mentioned in the #169 letters column)... whatever. The '90s produced a shit ton of AWESOME comics... let's stop looking down on that decade simply because it was the first era in comics where a significant portion of the readership was adults.

We'll see you in October for #172! Keep an eye out for WALKING DEAD tribute variants across the Image Comics line! Seven Skybound books are included, and our best artists are homaging some of the most notorious WALKING DEAD covers using their own characters.

-Sean Mackiewicz

OH, one more thing! Skybound is doing a whole slew of variants this month to showcase the talent of Italian artist LORENZO DE FELICI who may have an upcoming book at Skybound that may be announced soon. Who knows. But check out his work he's AMAZING!! He did a variant for this very comic!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

We've been getting some mail on just where the hell Beta went, and didn't want to disappoint. (We also just made a badass action figure of that dude, so check out the online Skybound shop for that one.)

By the time you're reading this, we'll be at the center of the greatest city in the world, announcing some cool new comics at NYCC, signings, panels, all that good stuff. And that also means Season 8 is just weeks away from premiering—ALL OUT WAR!!!

It's going to be ALL OUT AWESOME!

Dear Robert, Sean, and the rest of the gang,

I'm writing this to you minutes after I finished issue #170, and WOOP! As a Pittsburgher born and raised, I was extremely excited to see my city in the latest issue. Thank you for picturing it so accurately, I can even pick out a building my dad used to work in. Fanboying about my hometown aside, I do have a science-y type question for you guys. As seen time and time again in this comic, roamers follow sounds that they hear. As this is one of their only ways to track their prey, would a roamer become useless if they had their eardrums burst, or if someone just gave them high-grade earplugs? Thank you guys for writing such a fantastic comic, keep up the great work!

Best,
Quinn Connelly
Pittsburgh, PA

Great questions, Quinn. If a roamer were to lose their sense of hearing, they definitely wouldn't be useless. They could still see and, potentially, smell anyone nearby who needed eating. They just wouldn't be drawn to certain areas by sound and would probably have a harder time tracking down victims.

Dear Kirkman and henchmen,

While reading issue 170 I came across a curiosity on pages 16 and 17, which leads me to ask you a question. I even numbered it.

1. It's actually not a question, it's a complaint.

You see, Eugene and Friends™ are clearly crossing the Roberto Clemente Bridge into Pittsburgh. This is undoubtedly the case, as Charlie (or Chuck, as I like to call him) has painstakingly drawn each building in great detail, like a pixel-for-pixel match to the Google Maps screenshot you evidently took.

This is problematic because the Roberto Clemente Bridge approaches Pittsburgh from the north, whereas our braid-sporting brainiac Mr. Porter and his posse are coming from the DC area, which is very much south of Pittsburgh. It makes no sense that they would take a route that brings them north of Pittsburgh, and then inside of (and presumably, in issue 171, south of) Pittsburgh (spoiler alert?), and then west to Ohio. They should be traveling

northwest fairly consistently. Instead, we see them already north of Pittsburgh, going south.

While I appreciate your attempt at paying homage to Romero's blockbuster *Land of the Dead*, such sloppy inattention to detail will rot this comic from the inside out (*cough*BUTTONS*cough). I'm not even from Pittsburgh and I noticed this.

Yours truly,
Jacob from New York

Leave it to a New Yorker to correct us on the geography of another city. You're correct that they should be approaching Pittsburgh from the south, but the direct route isn't always the safest route. You don't know what debris or walkers forced them to take a more circuitous route toward entering Pittsburgh. This is why Marvel (in the good ol' days) used to award "No-Prizes" to readers who not only pointed out possible mistakes, but offered creative solutions. (The point is, those pages look great, and it's really not terribly interesting to explain just why they came in from the north.)

*I'm going to earn my own no-prize here... ready? Everyone knows THE WALKING DEAD takes place in a world where there isn't any zombie fiction. One of the reasons for this, is that in this dimension Pittsburgh was flipped vertically when it was built as a city. So north is south and south is north. So when Romero went to film *Night of the Living Dead*, the lighting was all wrong when he picked his shots, and it ruined the film and caused it never to be released. Fun fact, he went on to direct a series of amazing westerns and up until the zombie apocalypse, westerns remained the most popular film genre.*

Is Marco still alive?

Connor

He is not dead, just still working his way back from being shot in the leg. Man... that sucked.

Is the war with the whisperers over with? the last I read is that the whisperers made major offensive against the Hilltop and Alexandria Rick and his group managed to drive the ultra-herd into the ocean but Beta and the rest of the whisperers managed to sneak off so I am left to wonder if Rick is going to retaliate? or are they going to let the whisperers gather another ultra-herd to use against Rick at an undetermined date in the future? just looking for some closure

Peter

We'll give you closure. But sometimes closure—like Rosita's mystery man—takes time, and hits when you least expect it.

Keep in mind, the Whisperers were all but wiped out. Releasing the mega-herd was a last-ditch effort for revenge. The war had

pretty much been won at that point... so y'know... pretty much over. But maybe there's a new one starting?

Hello Robert and Sean!

First off, I love TWD. I think your creation is absolutely amazing.

I am writing because I have a few questions regarding Beta:

#1 - Are the three (I think) Whisperers we see with him when he leaves the only ones left?

Pretty much. It's possible there's a couple deserters out there drifting about, but there's only a few still with Beta that believe in "the cause."

#2 - Will we see him again before #201?

In fact, more of him next issue.

#3 - Can you confirm that he is someone new that we haven't met yet and not Davidson either? That would make no sense. Why would he hide his face from other Whisperers? And also he can't be a savior that Negan burned because Ndog would recognize him due to his height. I think he is deformed.

Thanks. Have a nice day.

-B. Francis Thornhill

All I can say is that you will get answers to those questions very soon.

To Mr Kirkman

Hello there sir. First of all thanks for the awesome issues and I wanted to say how much I Welled up with Rick talking to Mikey. I recently lost my father to lung cancer after a five year battle and the way this was written was how I was feeling.

The characters may not be real but the emotion used with the words are and I thank you for allowing me to escape reality for a while after reading your work.

Keep it up sir

Thanks
Chris Vint
Northern Ireland

That relationship is growing to be one of my favorites. What's this world without some compassion?

Hello Kirkman and company,

I just wanted to take a few minutes to say thank you. Thank you, in general, for creating this amazing world and comic series. But also thank you, specifically, for the scene in issue #170 where Rick comforts Mikey in the windmill. My sweet mother passed away (year long fight with cancer) about 2 weeks after 170 hit the shelf and that scene just perfectly captures where I find myself right now. The sitting around balling your eyes out and feeling like you'll never be happy again. No one loves you like your Mom does, so I know the heartbreaking anguish that Mikey is dealing with. I can't explain how much it means to me to see your characters deal with the same issues that I'm going through. So once again just thank you for giving me

an outlet to help with my grief.

Mitch Franklin
Indiana

P.S. I could really use a hug from Rick Grimes right about now

Sorry for your loss, Mitch. If you're at NYCC, you're more than welcome to a hug.

Make that two. Also, fuck cancer.

Hey guys,

I'll keep this short so that you can go on with your day.

First off, I love The Walking Dead. The Comics, TV Series, Fear, the video games, and whatever you plan to do in the future.

I've heard that The Walking Dead game has now reached around the same point in time as the comics. Jesus and some knights from the kingdom appeared in season 3 and it got me thinking, since season 4 of Telltale's The Walking Dead is supposed to be the last season, could Clementine and AJ move into the kingdom? Or perhaps Hilltop 2.0?

I really don't want Clementine's adventures to end, this would enable her to live on in the comic universe.

Just you know, a suggestion.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Grimm

We are asking ourselves these same questions right now as the writers room has opened. Clem will definitely be the focus of season 4.

Hey Sean and Robert,

Huge fan blah blah blah...

Loving the reveal of Siddiq being Rosita's (R.I.P.) baby daddy. I'm curious to see Eugene's reaction, as well as how the dynamic between the rest of the team shifts when they find out.

Anyway, quick question. How in the fuck do you pronounce Siddiq's name?

Is it Sih-Dick? Suh-Dick? Sih-Deek? Suh-Deek? Sid-Dick? Sid-Deek? Squid-Dick? None of the above?

As you can see, this has been bothering me for some time.

Thanks,
Jon F

I always thought it was "Sih-Deek". Though more knowledgeable readers (anyone but Jacob from New York, really), please correct us.

I say "Sih-Deek", so that's canon. Just like Michonne is technically "ME-SHAWN", but I've always said "MI-SHOWN" so that's what stuck... and what we use in the TV show. We're just shooting from the hip here at WALKING DEAD Central.

I've always wondered what happens in a scenario where there's a walker that's eating a corpse that's about to turn into a walker and the corpse

eventually becomes one while the walker is still eating its flesh, will the eating walker go away or keep eating it?

Rasol

The body cools and becomes unappealing to a zombie LONG before the person turns... so that would never happen. They'd stop eating and walk away with time to spare.

Hey Robert and Sean,

Issue 170 was just what we needed after all the tension and death from previous issues. Gay sex! Gay love! And straight sex being implied with Siddiq and Rosita.

More than implied. They definitely did the sex thing on multiple occasions.

I recall the early days of the comic where Michonne was "coping" with Tyreese and the stuff that lead to with Carol.....and Lori and Rick....man, those are old names. So, it's refreshing to again have a post-apocalyptic sex scandal.

Anyway, congrats with your zombie sex comic, I hope it does well!

-Casey

Zombie sex comic of the year! Got to appeal to those Eisner judges somehow.

No we don't.

Robert & Sean
(& Charlie/Stefano/Cliff/Rus/Dave...& a slew of others that deserve kudos!),

Two questions.

1: Can you give us any type of teaser to the next 'big thing'? (ie: the next Governor/Negan/Alpha or All Out War/Whisperers/Wolves/Prison war/Terminus/etc)

#175, this January.

That's a good teaser.

2: Suggestion vs question...how about a contest to have a character, even really minor in an issue or two, named after & resembling a fan? (unrelated, how about writing in a character named Jason?!)

We only do that to pry original art out of collectors' hands. And we never do it publicly... I'd never want to reveal that kind of abuse of our power.

3 (thought of another): I think you've addressed this, but with "Here's Negan" now finished, do you have similar back stories planned for others?

Nope... but I think Princess has an interesting backstory... so we'll see. I'd probably have to do Jesus before then, though... right? Or that would make fans mad.

Thank you all, especially Robert, for letting us into your TWD world!! Keep it up!!!

Jason Jensen
Farmington, MN

We will! Thanks, Jason.

This is a rant. I have gotten every issue since 25. This comic used to be the baddest book ever. Every issue murder and mayhem. Now it is the gayest book

ever. I'm not even a little bit homophobic but can we please color the book pink and change the title to "love the walking dead style". I really almost threw up twice in this comic 170. First, Rick, the king of badassery, cries and hugs a dude. Then the hot chicks make out, sort of. Finally, Jesus tells another guy he loves him. It's over! Let's just wrap this shit up. The shark has been officially jumped. Can we really be sure your wife or some fan girl isn't writing this crap?

You are a little bit, if not a lot, homophobic. And definitely misogynistic.

I'm also pissed Negan and Rick didn't duel it out.

So instead of all these great characters showing love and affection, you want two guys pounding each other? Ok, man... I get it.

So in case you need some bad ideas for the future. Bring back Shane. lol. Have Carl kill Rick. Sadly, probably already planned for season 9. I stopped watching the TV show. Don't make me quit this damn comic book!

Derek

So, more gay stuff? Okay, we'll get right on it!

Hello, Robert and company. I have a question about an issue that the characters will probably have to face in the inevitable future.

Rick and the other leaders always talk about how they're building a sustainable future, but like... aren't they gonna have major population problems? All the current adult characters are gonna get old and die way before the kids, assuming they live long healthy lives and aren't murdered. I know they have Carl, Lydia, Sophia, Hershel Jr, and some other miscellaneous kids in the communities, but not quite enough to usher in a new generation and maintain the numbers they currently have.

Shouldn't reproduction be a major priority? Rick should hold a town meeting and tell everyone to get busy.

Regards, Bob

The issue is that everyone in THE WALKING DEAD is now gay, because of Derek's letter... so reproduction is going to be an issue that might bring about the extinction of the species, but they're going to have a hell of a fun time before the end.

Sorry... that's just how it's going to be.

Next month, Beta attacks. Don't miss it.

Turn the page for a preview of our latest series, SLOTS, by Dan Panosian. Dan is a masterful artist taking his first crack at writing, and he's created a really fun crime story about a former boxer on his last legs, looking for redemption... but doesn't mind going down swinging! This one's in stores now. If you're reading this comic in the shop (no judgment), pick that one up while you're at it!

-Sean Mackiewicz

You guys and gals are really going to love SLOTS, it's a really cool book! Enjoy this preview. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to find ways to make this book gayer. Thanks for the suggestions, Derek!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

With Beta dead and those other Whisperers getting taken out, are there any left? Perhaps you should be more worried about this new faction making themselves known... and, man, I can't wait for you all to see what's in the works. We're fresh off of New York Comic Con, and we just announced the NEW WORLD ORDER storyline, starting this January. It's full of new friends, new enemies, and new threats. At the risk of sounding like a cliché hype machine, TWD has never seen anything that looks like this.

That is VERY true, Sean! It's an exciting time for WALKING DEAD fans. This book is going to look VERY different in a few short months, so buckle up!

As I type this, we're a little more than a week away from the big premiere of WALKING DEAD SEASON 8! Which is our 100th episode! So by the time you're reading this, you will have seen it. Great, right? It's going to be an absolutely insane season of television. So buckle up for that, too!

I hope you have a lot of buckles!

Buckle up for this letters column!

So the first time Andrea gets a last name, it's in relation to a MAN, eh? Way to be progressive, Mister Kirkman! What do you have to say for yourself?

Jason

That's EXACTLY the message I was trying to send, Jason. Women don't deserve their own names. Only their father's and husband's names! Oh, wait... that's society... damn. We've got some real deep-rooted issues to deal with here, don't we?

Dear Mr. Kirkman and that one other dude,

I am slightly skeptical of this 'Princess' lady. I want to know more. Is she really crazy?

Listen, everyone knows that we're never gonna survive unless we get a little crazy. We're never gonna survive unless we are a little crazy.

Sheesh, Sean. SHEESH.

Also, I wanted to say I love the relationship between Magna and Yumiko. I never saw it coming and it hit me right in the face. You really seem to pair the best people together. For example Rick and Andrea. my power couple of the apocalypse.

Audios

Tristan of Wichita

You're never gonna survive... UNLESS...

Dear Robert, Charlie and Sean,

Not to brag, but I'm glad I've guessed about Eugene's radio (LH148) and Siddiq's fatherhood (LH152). Today, I'm writing about the Princess. About that new character, can I first say that her introduction was simply absofuckinglutely awesome? Since the day I saw the cover for #171, I thought: "Now, THAT's one typical TWD character!". I mean, do you guys ever realize that your style is this much recognizable? And I don't mean predictable: she completely caught me by making me laugh out loud! Bravo, Charlie & Robert. If we lost a Glenn for a Negan, and if we can assume that we've lost an Andrea for a Princess... then yes, she better be important!

Anyway, if you allow me to keep playing theories: about the Princess... She did mention that she and her brother ARE rarities, present form. Wasn't she supposed to be "alone"?

You weren't the only reader who pointed out that dialogue. I'll tell you this: it could mean something, or nothing. And I really have no idea which.

Heh.

She might be onto something, maybe she's an outcast from Stephanie's larger group (who said they've fought their own battles) and she tries to use Michonne's group to get back in. Perhaps to reach her brother? I just hope she won't jeopardize everything. Last thing - and this is purely gratuitous - her big mouth reminds me of another big mouth we all love... Negan's still single, right?

Ludovic Iadanza from fucking France

PS: if you do a Jesus backstory, I swear we wouldn't be too mad.

Come on, let's do it—TWD: PRAISE

JESUS! Or was it JESUS SAVES?

TWD: JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH? I'll get right on it!

Hello walking dead team!

The walking dead comic is the first comic book I ever read and I have been enjoying it since last august. However I just finished reading issue 170 and when I read the scene where two women were kissing (I forgot their names.) I was offended. I have several friends and family who are either lesbian or gay and I found your way of letting the readers know that those two are lesbian was very poorly done.

I would of much rather seen them come out in a less sexual way. You could of had them confess their love for each other in a much more normal way. I very much still enjoy this comic and will still pick it up monthly, but that scene did leave a bad taste in my mouth.

-Benjamin

It's a safe bet that the majority of TWD characters' sexuality has been discovered through kissing—or more! Michonne's sexual preference was revealed when she went down on Tyrese. The much beloved couple of Glenn and Maggie went for a literal roll in the hay. Besides, kissing... kissing is just fun.

I feel like this is getting out of hand. This REALLY offended you? Really? Well then, I guess you are probably used to being offended. I don't think the scene was overly sexualized and I don't think the characters exist only to be sexual... so I don't feel there's an issue here.

Hey guys,

I know you plan months, sometimes years in advance. I just wondered if you have issue 200 planned out yet? As it's only... 2 and a half years away.

Steven,
London, UK

I'll take the wager that #200 comes out two and half years from now...

Yeah, it's only 27 months away... it's only... 27... months... away. I'm getting old. Hell, we all are. But yes, I know exactly what happens in #200. How else are you going to top issue #100?

Fellas,

I fear the Princess wreaks of Poochie. Let this be one of those times I've written you off only to have my mind blown shortly after,

please. Thanks!

Mason Lerner

Princess was also compared to Cousin Oliver, which is a more dated reference than Poochie, so, Mason Lerner, you're the lucky winner.

Princess will soon be everyone's favorite character!

Rad!

Mr. Kirkman,

Years ago, I told you that I had an odd attraction to your fictional character Rosita. I was upset that Holly stole Abraham from her. You responded by killing Holly, presumably to get right with me.

Later, you decided that Rosita should be unfaithful to my man Eugene. I guess it wasn't enough to have Abraham break her heart. You had to make her the villain, to try to ruin her in my eyes. And then, when you were done toying with me, you killed her.

It's okay, I got over it. I kept buying the book. But now, while I was glad to see Eugene finally learn the identity of the baby's father, you decide to run with "she loved me" instead of "it was a one time mistake". And with Rosita dead, we'll never know if she was playing both sides or if Siddiq is just disillusioned.

Seriously man, why? I suppose your next step is to have twelve other guys come forward claiming to be the father? Let's just COMPLETELY ruin Rosita for me.

Maybe I'm wrong. I'll give you one last chance. You have my contact info. If you can get Christian Serratos to call me, I will forgive you.

Justin

Perhaps you'll never know, or perhaps you could just trust Rosita when she told Eugene that they weren't in love. It could've been more than a one-time thing, but even then, that doesn't mean love. Maybe reading what Mary here has written in the next letter will give you a different perspective...

One thing that REALLY bugs me... a cheating woman is automatically a villain? Have you watched TV? Almost every SINGLE male protagonist is cheating on his wife. Are they categorized as villains? No... layered characters. LORI WAS NOT A VILLAIN. Her infidelity was more than justified. I never understood why she was so vilified.

I agree that in the vast majority of cases, being unfaithful is an act to be vilified. Sure. But there are exceptions

and it seems female characters especially are NEVER given the benefit of the doubt. At least you didn't call Rosita a slut. That's a step in the right direction.

Anyway, Rosita... she had feelings for Abraham and was heartbroken to learn he didn't feel the same way about her. She loved Eugene, but she wasn't happy, or rather, content the way she wanted to be or the way every human deserves to be. So she strayed. It was a mistake and she regretted it. Which is WHY I included that flashback of her talking to Eugene.

The point of that scene is that Siddiq believes she loved him. Eugene is big enough to allow him to continue thinking that, because they both lost Rosita and Eugene knows that hurts, so he's not going to make it worse by correcting him.

Also, Justin, I love you and all... but I think it would be best if you kept a safe distance from Christian.

Hey!

Okay, so, I got a few, probably to you guys, irrelevant questions but I'm a fangirl so bare with me here lmao

Did Rosita actually love Eugene? Cause Sid said that she loved him, but, considering it was Sids baby and she KNEW that, why the fuck would she stay with Eugene and have the baby with him and not the father/man she loves? Eugene didn't really seem to fight Sid on that, was that just him offering any comfort to a man who was suffering alone? Ugh, I don't know, maybe it was obvious and I'm clueless lmao, I just gotta know kirkman!!

See above. She was going to raise the baby with Eugene for a reason. Siddiq is indeed wrong to believe she actually loved him.

Next!

Were you always planning on making Magna a Lesbian/bisexual? Cause her new relationship seemed out of the blue to me. Also, I thought she had lowkey flirting with Dwight that Laura got a huge wiff of and was not having it!

I could pretend that I'd always planned it, but to be completely honest, we got a letter commenting on how we'd never had a lesbian in the book and I thought it was a huge blind spot and moved to fix that ASAP. I don't believe Magna's sexuality was ever explicitly discussed. I did have Yumiko in mind as a lesbian that was attracted to Magna from the get go (and I believe there's at least a panel here and there that set that up), but the original idea was to play how

sad it would be for a friend not to share the attraction you have for them and how awkward that would make things. But instead I just decided to make Magna a closeted lesbian who isn't yet comfortable with who she is... but she's getting there.

Next!

First off all, I find it hilarious how Sherry was planning a revolution against rick and this bitch gets kicked and it takes her out. I was literally laughing saying 'what the fuck?' Looking at that damn panel. Like wow honey, okay. Anyways, what's in the works for the sanctuary? I know you can't spoil anything but at least give me some juicy tid bits. They're directionless with no leader!

We are very fragile things, us people. Necks break all the time. It wasn't simply because she was a woman or anything. It was a bad hit in an awkward position.

We'll see more of the Sanctuary eventually. Just keep reading.

And lastly....

Are we ever gonna see Stephanie? I've been waiting for her and Eugene to meet for ages now. I also hope the pay offs good because Eugene is my favorite and to see him get snaked by yet ANOTHER woman I'd be pretty pissed!

Maybe you'll see her in NEW WORLD ORDER. No guarantees about getting snaked, though...

Anyways! I just want to say how much I love your book, you're the reason I'm writing and drawing my own comic now and I want to thank you for all the inspiration!

Mary
St. Louis, Missouri

Strong Letter Hack, Mary. You came in with an agenda, made your points, then pulled off a solid closer. That's really bringing your "A" game.

Yes, nicely done.

Next month, we check back in with Negan. Just what does that guy get up to all by himself? Maybe you don't really want to know, but we're going to tell you anyways in December!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Okay, that'll do it! Thanks for writing in to those who did--and if you didn't, what are you waiting on? Wouldn't it be fun to be a part of Letter Hacks?! See you all right back here in December!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Where does Negan go from here? That was my first thought after reading the script for this issue, and you know what? Robert wouldn't give me the answer! Regardless, I hope you enjoyed this issue as much as I did, and hopefully gave you some closure seventy-five issues later.

Hey, look at that, this issue marks seventy-five issues of Negan. Sheesh... I never thought he'd last this long, to be completely honest. He is a somewhat divisive character, but I think after all this time, most people have grown to love to hate him... and maybe even flat out love him. He's certainly a joy to write, and this issue was a great example of that. I hope you guys enjoyed it as much as I did.

Long time reader first time writing in and all that. This email is in response to the letter from Jon F in issue #172, asking how to pronounce Siddiq's name.

It's Sih-ddick (the two Ds are pronounced as dental fricatives, like the 'th' in 'though', and stressed for the double letters).

Phoentic spelling (enPR): sĭththĭk

Also, Siddiq is an Indian name, not an Arab one; Princess was mistaken in #172 (or you were). Either way, not everyone with a beard is an Arab.

Sahith

ALL hipsters AREN'T Arab? Good to know... I was just going to thank you for writing in, but then Robert wrote this rebuttal ... so just leave me out of this one entirely.

Tsk, tsk, Sean. Don't believe every single person who writes in pretending to have authority. Wikipedia tells us:

Siddiq (Arabic: قی‌دص pronounced ['sɪd.dɪq]; from the Arabic word meaning "truthful") is an Islamic term and is given as an Honorific title to certain individuals. The feminine gender for Siddiq is Siddiqah. The word is sometimes used as a title given to individuals by Muhammad, according to Islamic sources.

I could be wrong (I'm not), but that pronunciation is "SID DEEK." Also, from a

random baby naming website:

The name Siddiq is an Arabic baby name. In Arabic the meaning of the name Siddiq is: Friend. Righteous.

I'm not saying it's not an Indian name AS WELL, but it is Arab and Siddiq is an Arab-American. Try harder next time, Sahith!

Guys...was 172 the gayest issue ever? I think so. I can speak for all Walking Dead gays when I say we loved it. Keep it coming. Please don't kill them immediately.

Casey

Why not! Gayest issue ever... for now.

Ha! I'll take that as a challenge! I think with a little effort we could do an issue that's way gayer!

Dear Mr. Kirkman

Since Rick and the other people found a safe haven and began to settle down, the zombies became a manageable although still menacing threat (see Andrea). But I asked myself: When somebody dies in his sleep, without the wife or husband (straight or gay) beside noticing it, the danger returns in the middle of the community despite all the walls, ditches and guards. I think it could in the worst case destroy the community and erase all what was achieved. Did the people figure something out to minimize the threat?

I am looking forward to the next issue.

Best,
Sascha Marcec
Wil/Switzerland

I don't think one zombie would be that dangerous were it to suddenly appear inside the walls of Alexandria.

Dear Robert, Sean and company,

I was shocked and very sad after reading Derek's letter on Issue #172. There was so much hate in it. I honestly thought that the readers of TWD were more tolerant, since Jesus and Aaron have been in the comics for so long with us and more recently Magna

and Yumiko have joined the group.

Thanks for giving him an appropriate answer, you could have been even harder, but I honestly think this kind of letter (homophobic, misogynist, racist, etc.) shouldn't even be published on letter hacks, because it is all about hate. And the comic shows how people can still develop their relations and built a society despite all the chaos caused by the walkers. After all, the real world have problems much bigger than zombies.

Sincerely,

Lorena
Brazil

Agreed. We've received a few more in that vein--mostly since THE GAYEST ISSUE EVER!!!!!--and we have no plans of running more because this isn't the platform to express hate. Unless it's for me and Robert. Then hate all you want.

Agreed! And while we're not going to fill this letters column with these letters, I DO feel it's important for us to take a stand on these issues and make our opinions known. How else would you dear readers be certain we don't AGREE with those ideas? I think it's healthy to point out how wrong people are when they want to oppress any other type of person as opposed to celebrating our differences and how they make us better as a whole. I mean, that IS kind of what this book is about. We're stronger together, ALL of us, not just the ones that are like us.

Hey guys,

I know you plan months, sometimes years in advance. I just wondered if you have issue 200 planned out yet? As it's only... 2 and a half years away.

Steven,
London, UK

I'll take the wager that #200 comes out two and half years from now...

Yeah, it's only 27 months away... it's only... 27... months... away. I'm getting old. Hell, we all are. But yes, I know exactly what happens in #200. How else are you going to top issue #100?

Dear Kman,

Already hate the new chick. Wow is she annoying AF. Reminds me of those super happy people that we all know. There's at least one in every persons life. That always upbeat and so happy to see you one. Kill her. Please.

(PS I know it's a sign of good writing when people hate your characters so, good job there I suppose).

Tony from Cleveland
(They're headed to Cleveland, right? Not Colombus?)

We'll even accept hate for Princess... even though you're in the minority, Tony from Cleveland.

Princess is fucking awesome! You'll be seeing so much more of her.

Hey guys,

Massive fan of the comic books and the Telltale Games, excited for the new one from the creators of Payday, if we ever see it. Question, how much control do you have over that game?

We just had a meeting last week with the Starbreeze folks to discuss marketing of the upcoming game. Marketing which should start kicking in soon, say, around the mid-season finale. Our relationship with Starbreeze is very comparable to how we work with Telltale. We review story docs, character models, gameplay... pretty much everything, to make sure it feels true to the comic while providing a great gaming experience.

Also, I know it's been a long time coming, but that's because Starbreeze/Overkill is taking their time to make the game GREAT. We don't want another Survival Instinct on our hands! When games are rushed... they're not good!

Also, I stopped reading the comics for a while, as in, like a year and a half. And it's amazing to come back and instantly remember what's happening and who's doing what.

Also in Issue 172, saw a letter from a "not homo-phobic" fan, and I just wanna say Rick's lost Lori 2.0, of course he's gonna be upset, are we to assume that he's just gonna be fine with it and have no emotions about it. It was heart breaking for the fans as well. And as well as other people getting it on whether straight/gay/bi what difference does it make? It's not as if there's a whole issue with Jesus and Aaron just having homosexual sex for each panel. Personally it's nice to see that these people are finding even shreds of happiness in the face of danger.

Keep up the good work, and I really hope you reach the 300 issue mark.

From Bill Murray, UK

Thanks for coming back, Bill. And this

whole issue of gay sex you suggest is very tempting... Maybe that's what we'll do for issue #300.

Hello Mr. Kirkman.

This is my very first time writing to you, so, of course I have my hopes up when it comes to seeing this letter posted in one of your coming issues, but, if that just asking way too much, I'll deal with it with my pillow and a pack of doritos...

Congrats! Your letter is being printed! So lay off the Doritos!

First of all, I'm writing from a already apocalyptic country in the world, Venezuela, and I can't cease to be amazed by the fact that your characters are living way better than us, even with the walkers around. We're living in a TWD world, but only with the Savivors, and the Whisperers, and yeah, a hell of Governor...

Anyway, that's not what I wanted to share with you, but it was great taking it out of my system. The truth is that I'm following your comics almost from the beginning, I have a cousin living in Pasadena, and with his help I've imported your comic to my country, Don't know if that's legal, but, it feels so great when I open that envelop and I smell all the blood, excitement and sadness from the cover. And I'm proud to say that I'm the ONLY person in my hometown to possess almost ALL the current issues of TWD. Sadly, with my country's situation, it's getting harder to me to get your AMAZING comic, but, I will try with my last breath to follow you forever. Now, I have some quite simple questions for you.

1. Why the decision to have Rick and Michonne as a couple in the TV series? Every time I see that, feels like incest to me. I don't know... WHY?

I don't know how that could seem like incest! They are very close platonic friends in the comics, but that could just as easily change one day. Who knows! We felt, and the majority of people agree, that they would make a great couple in the TV show. Seeing those two characters happy together in the show frankly just warms my heart. I'm sorry you don't dig it!

2. Why did Shiva had to die? C'mon it was a Tiger! I would've loved to see Shiva sad after Ezekiel's kebab...

Well... that was a long time ago (although more recent in the show, show spoilers!). I feel like it was an important turning point in Ezekiel's life that got him through ALL OUT WAR and gave him the opportunity to grow as a character in interesting ways. And also,

I hate animals... so there.

3. Can you describe to me, how may the survivors smell like? I mean, I know that's a weird question, but, please just answer me... (Thanks)

They smell terrible, and then they shower, and then they smell okay for a little while until they start to smell terrible again.

and finally...

4. When I first saw the name Juanita, I thought "Really? Juanita, Rosita... What's next" And next, she's Mexican, I know many latin american people reside in the USA, so, why not a Venezuelan? C'mon, we Venezuelans know how to survive ANYTHING! Food and water shortage, we don't need electric power that much either, we are tough as hell! So c'mon, make it happen! A Venezuelan in TWD would make my pain ever easier to carry.

We'll get to work on that right away, Carlos. You make a compelling case.

Thanks for reading! Love you all from the bottom of my oppressed heart!

Carlos Vásquez, Bolívar, Venezuela.

Thanks for writing in.

Hello Robert and Sean,

I'm a great fan of your work and your recommendations, after your words I saw all Romero's movies and loved them.

I was reading the last letters you published and I remembered a great feeling reading a classical argentinian comic called El Eternauta that shows an alien apocalypse in Buenos Aires, and how awesome it was to recognize the places we pass through every day, so I can understand the feelings of your readers but.....I'm a little envy that we can't see own own cities displayed at TWD.

Let's hit pause for a sec: The Eternaut was published by Fantagraphics in English for the first time ever two years ago. It's a fascinating apocalyptic invasion comic (drawn by Francisco Solano Lopez) that also doubled as a political critique of the military dictatorship controlling Argentina at the time. Its writer, Hector German Oesterheld, disappeared, presumably by the government; shortly after, his daughters and their husbands were arrested, and never seen again. Highly recommended.

My point is: Is there any possibility of some special issues with small stories of the zombie apocalypse in another countries for

the abroad`s fans? If that`s so I would be grateful if you don't make the stereotypical point of Argentina as a nazi bunker but whatever you decide I`m sure I`ll love it.

It's that time again to recommend you check out BKV and Marcos Martin's TWD: THE ALIEN, available exclusively at panelsyndicate.com. It's the only time TWD has featured the apocalypse occurring in another country.

If you, or someone of your team, decide to travel to "know the feeling" of the location, I'll be glad to show you better places in Buenos Aires than any travel agency could do...I`m an urban history teacher and fucking cool so mi casa es tu casa.

Gabriela
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Gabriela, I was in Buenos Aires a couple years ago for a comic convention, where they had a huge, immersive *Eternauta* exhibit, which is how I first learned about it. Your city would be a fascinating location to explore in world, but no plans at the current time.

Hello The Walking Dead team,

I didn't know letter hacks existed until I started reading individual issues and now I am happy to say I have found a way to contact Robert Kirkman and the rest of the team (I am so sorry guys I am terrible with names).

Anyway, I would like to make a comment from the most recent issue (#171) I am desperate to meet Stephanie (that's my name!!) but a particular scene caught my attention (drumroll please):

I am quite impressed with the interaction between Carl and Sofia. Sofia is a great female character! When Carl started apologizing and saying that he couldn't talk to Sofia because he was technically in a relationship, I frowned at such common statement but rejoiced when Sofia confidently say that she wants to talk, be his friend, not his "girlfriend."

It made me feel better. A lot of people frown upon talking to your "exes" (I consider Carl and Sofia exes in the sense that they stopped being friends for a period of time) or talking to people who are in romantic relationships, but there's nothing wrong with it! We are people, human beings, and we need friends. Thank you. It just emphasized the importance of friendship regardless of one's relationship status.

I have been enjoying the comics a lot: it shows the raw human nature and the extent of one's willingness to stay alive. I bet you hear it thousands of times but The Walking

Dead is indeed amazingly good.

Best regards,
Stephanie (not the one from Ohio)

I like Carl and Sophia as friends as well, but I have a sneaking suspicion that there's more to come with that storyline.

You never know...

Okay okay okay, I guess I can say this new cover image (for issue # 175) has me excited. And the mass-produced armor thing makes sense and shouldn't necessarily imply they are Storm Troopers, as what was originally what came to mind upon first glance. Though I wonder what the reasoning was behind using what appears to be 3 human clones for the cover, as their eyes and expression appear to be exact copies. What's up with that? Did someone actually raise a clone army? Or are we just looking at triplets? hahaha..... But seriously, after many years since the Turn, I suppose someone would eventually develop a standardized protocol for dealing with the undead and protecting themselves. Sure, Rick got pretty far as establishing a network of colonies and raising a rag-tag army, but whoever is in charge of these armored troopers must be one organized individual, probably former military. What is he or she like? Is that person loved or feared by their people? Both? What was their story from the Turn until now? Are they good people? Do they force an ultimatum to whomever they come across to assimilate or die? Lots of questions! Mr. Kirkman, you always leave me guessing!

Y'all keep up the good work!

John Bailey
Spokane, WA

What a way to save me time for teasing next issue by just running this as the final letter for this month's Hacks! Solid work, John!

Nicely done, Sean.

Get ready for BIG THINGS in January, when the six-part "New World Order" storyline starts! Happy holidays! Happy new year! Got to get those out of the way because once #175 hits, we'll have a WHOLE LOT more to talk about!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Yeah, it's a very exciting time to be reading THE WALKING DEAD. There's a whole lot of cool, new, crazy stuff on the horizon, so stay tuned!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

I fell for it just as much as you. "New World Order"--new community, new friends, new enemies, all-new everything... and then--BAM--the past catches up to one of our most beloved characters. Is a reunion in store for Michonne? I hope so...

Also, as you may have noticed, we're starting to celebrate TWD's 15th anniversary a little early by commissioning legendary artist Bill Sienkiewicz to draw portraits of our most cherished--and loathed--characters. So each issue, from here 'til December, will have a variant portrait cover. They're beautiful. It's really cool to see these characters get a realistic spin since we've gotten so used to seeing all those Hollywood folks on the TV. Andrew Lincoln, stop being so goddamn handsome for once in your life!

Hey! The anniversary is in 2018, so this counts! The whole year counts! We can celebrate all YEAR! And we have all kinds of awesome stuff planned to do so. Although it will be very difficult to top these Sienkiewicz covers! HOLY CRAP, are they amazing or what?!

I hope the end of this issue caught all of you off guard. This is either leading to the most positive and optimistic storyline in TWD history... or the darkest one... we'll just have to wait and see.

In the meantime--letters!

Gentlemen,

Finally have some time to write to both of you again after staying up past midnight for the download of #173. Some thoughts:

I really thought Jesus and Aaron were dead. And that line about the "extreme commitment to the Whisperer way of life" was too funny. Seems we need more of this humour around when the undead roam.

Carl, Carl, Carl... Two girls and one you? Watch your back (take a tip from Jesus on this).

Carl's way too respectful to try to

juggle two girls. He's not even trying to do that! He's the premiere teenaged gentleman of the apocalypse.

Dante may finally get somewhere with Maggie. You don't track Negan for nothing I suppose...

Listen, I do worry about the sustainability of any relationship fostered in the wake of deciding not to kill Negan. Maggie deserves happiness... but is this it?

And I like that couple which refused to wear the skins. Glad someone besides the communities we know can see how repellent that might be.

And finally, the other group. I don't think Eugene and co. are really in trouble, but I am noticing something interesting here. The weapons these new people own have blades on them. These people are prepared for anything - close and long-range fighting. So, maybe he was naive to trust that CB Voice, but there is a chance that this is leading to a bigger world (did I just steal that line?).

Anyway, great issue and I hope Rick does finally recover from Andrea's death. They still need him.

KD from Canada

Maybe we should have called this arc, "AN EVEN LARGER WORLD".

Before I start, I wanted to simply thank all of the people on TWD for entertaining us for what must have now be something like a third of my life. Thank you Robert, Charlie, Stefano, Cliff, Rus and Sean for the great everyday work you put in.

I feel a bit worried with the direction TWD is taking, after more than 170 issues of amazingness. I know better than to completely drop the whole thing or pretend I would do any better but... I feel like the whole tone of TWD is changing and it leaves me doubtful.

Negan's redemption? I'll jump in the wagon of those who find it really hard to swallow.

I wish you explained more about

why you felt that way. I think Negan is striving for redemption, but will he ever get it? Can he ever get it? That's an interesting question still worth exploring. There's really no other candidate whose path toward redemption would be more unlikely or compelling. But maybe we'll never even see Negan again after last issue. How would THAT make you feel?

Rick getting away with so many close-calls just by displaying a kind of messianic attitude where he gets people pointing guns at him to stand down through a speech about civilization. Again, hard to swallow. Is it really that times are changing or that the tone is changing? It also feels like things don't have much consequences anymore. Hilltop and Alexandria look like they'll be rebuilt in no time!

This new Princess Girl? How could she have survived for so long? She looks like a manga character and acts like one. So long after the apocalypse, how can she still be so joyful? She feels like a kind of replacement for Negan's comic relief, minus the vulgarity. Did we really need one?

No one can replace Negan. That's not really the goal of Princess. The response to her is split, sure... definitely leans more "pro" than "con"... but it wasn't so long ago everyone was screaming for Negan to fucking die, so... let's just see where the story goes!

Is it me or that Letter Hacks column is influencing more and more the comic? Just to single one example (there could have been many others) A few months ago, someone pointed out that there was no lesbian character left in the comic : Poof! Magna and Yukiko made their coming out. It also feels like the comic is becoming more and more in your face towards what the authors stand for. Whilst I share the same views as you guys and wish for racial, sexual and gender equality, was it necessary to have a comical coming out in the form of Yukiko joking about it and a speech about minorities from Princess? I've always felt that the strength of TWD in that aspect has been to show us badass characters and despicable characters coming from every background just doing their thing instead of having them stopping and making highlighting the point. It just feels like the finesse and grit behind the comic is vanishing to become more and more like a shonen manga.

I love your stuff, will continue reading and recommending, however, colour me a bit puzzled by the recent turn of events.

Pier-André Doyon, Shanghai

I hear you, Pier-Andre. I'd like to think your issue is with one character and one scene in particular (for the most part), and I hope #174 was an example that the series isn't really drifting from its roots. I've discussed how the Yumiko/Magna story took form after working on this letters column. I truly believe it was a huge mistake to have gotten this far in the book without lesbian characters. A few short decades ago, people could be complaining about me "shoehorning" black characters into the book, and I hope you'd see how terrible that sounds now as a way to recognize that representation matters and blah blah blah. I'm not going to get on a high horse there, but these things ARE important and don't detract from the story, in my opinion.

I wanna take a stab at Beta's true identity. Is he Michael Jordan?

I tried,
Jacob from New York

As one of the biggest NBA fans in the office, I love this letter. Not because you're remotely right... no, no, no. First of all, MJ would never accept a subservient position like Beta... He is a bald-headed Alpha through and through. Of all the athletes in the world, he is the #1 candidate to rule with an iron fist. He is the most INSANE competitor in the history of sports. There is no challenge he's ever backed down from, nothing he won't gamble on, and he once sported a Hitler mustache in a Hanes commercial! He had NO qualms about adopting the defining look of THE MOST EVIL FUCKER OF THE 20TH CENTURY for a NATIONALLY televised commercial! There's ZERO chance he decided to become some benevolent ruler somewhere in North Carolina. He rocked a Hitler mustache! MJ's coming for you, Rick! MJ's COMING!!!!!!!

Now THERE'S a new direction I could get behind. Would people complain if Michael Jordan was the next villain in this book? That'd be amazing, right?!

Kirkman et al,

I've been a long time fan of all Walking Dead mediums. You're a huge - if not predominant - inspiration to me and my own creative endeavors. What hooked me on your story was how real is felt and the existential dread it inspired. I thought "Holy shit, is this all my species is reduced to without society?" It was so gritty and real and visceral and compelling.

But then I stumbled into #173, anxious about the fate of my good chums Jesus and Aaron. I haven't seen Shaolin monks perform the godly feats of athleticism so flawlessly executed by Jesus in this issue. Backflipping out of harm's way with a follow up ground kick? A super round two-part kick with a ninja throwing-knife finale? I couldn't help but feel as though perhaps some divine forces were working through Jesus, and as bad ass as it was, it reminded me that I was reading a comic book in a way that grabbed me like a rubber chicken and flung me out of the story. For God's sake, man! Paul Monroe is a former barista or Apple Genius or something - not an anime character.

I really want to love Jesus. My parents spent a great deal of their resources to that effort throughout my childhood. But he's too perfect. He's super nice, steady and untested morals, could take on Naruto, etc. But you tend to work magic and turn less compelling characters into awesome ones, so I'm holding out hope for awesome Jesus moments in store.

With love,
Bennett

PS. Tell me Negan's full name, I beseech thee.

No.

Especially not after complaining about Jesus!!

Greetings Kirkman and Company,

Can I get some closure that Beta is actually 100% for sure dead? The only reason I think he might still be alive is that it never showed Jesus or Aaron put a bullet in his brain. They thought he was dead at first and then when he popped back up and fell down again no further action was taken to make sure Beta was actually dead this time. This seems really out of character for Jesus and Aaron, I just feel like they would have checked his pulse or just stabbed him in the head to make sure the job was done. Was this done off page or is Beta still alive?

Mitch Franklin
Indiana

He's dead.

Dear Robert, Charlie and Sean

I really think Rick needs a bro at the moment. After the passing of Andrea he has been at the grave a lot. I'm not too sure how he is going to come back from this. Give him someone he can have a beer with and open up to. I'm a bit concerned. That is all.

Gemma Fisher
Plymouth, Uk

You're on to something. Maybe Rick's new bro has already been established recently.

Dear Powers That Be,

In light of current saddening events of TWD on tv. Will we ever see a character/ animal tag team duo like we did with King Ezekiel and Shiva again? I'd love to see a badass character with a really awesome dog or wolf or something!!!

Dustin Smith

I hope so. Maybe you're more likely to see something like that in a video game that's planning its fourth season... or something...

SHHHHHHH.

Hey TWD organisms,

You want a newer reference about The Princess? She reminds me of a grown up version of Louise from Bob's Burgers. I fucking love her already. You guys are awesome!

Thanks,
Mikael M

P.S. here's some Metal horns \m/

If Louise existed in TWD, she would be standing by MJ's side. \m/

"New World Order" Part 2 hits in February! Come back to see what other surprises the Commonwealth contains. Also, watch out for the Michonne portrait variant by Bill Sienkiewicz! You can talk about *Elektra: Assassin* all you want, give me that *RZA Bobby Digital in Stereo* album cover art any day of the week!

-Sean Mackiewicz

There is SO MUCH NEW AND COOL STUFF on the horizon in this storyline. The Commonwealth is going to bring with it a whole new cast of characters that will play off characters who we've grown to love in very different ways than we've seen before. We're all very excited about this storyline here at TWD Central! So we'll see you all back here in one short month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

We teased you with Elodie at the end of last issue, and we're not big enough creeps that we'd make you wait twenty-five issues to confirm she's alive. There's a lot to untangle between mother and daughter, a lot of time missed to catch up on... more next issue.

Two happy ending cliffhangers in a row?! What has happened to this book?! Also, response to issue #175 was pretty overwhelmingly awesome. I'm so glad you guys are liking the direction we're going in. It was a wild swing we were taking, and I was worried people might respond negatively to the idea of Michonne's daughter still being alive. Turns out... maybe it's time for a little positivity in this book. WHO KNEW?

In other news, the back half of season 8 will be starting THIS MONTH! You just have to wait until February 25th to find out Carl's final fate. This is a pretty monumental event for the story, and it's happening smack dab in the middle of All-Out War! So it's going to make for an interesting back half of the season. I hope you all dig it.

And this half of season 8 leads directly into Fear The Walking Dead season 4, which will shake up that show in a majorly cool way. So make sure you hang around for that.

We've also got all kinds of new games, toys, shirts and pogs on the way, so make sure you check out www.thewalkingdead.com to keep up-to-date on things we may forget to mention here.*

We haven't really made pogs.*

***We did consider it, though.*

Now, let's dive into this mail and see if I have any integrity whatsoever left after all that shilling!

Hello Kirkman and Co,

I was watching the season 7 premiere of the Walking Dead with my friend at his apartment when I was first introduced to the show and was immediately hooked.

After that, I dove into the comics and was absolutely blown away by the dark, charming story you've told. It's amazing how you've managed to keep it fresh for so long. But what I loved most was Negan. Not because I got a secret wish to bash people's heads in, but I kind of relate to the guy (swear to god I'm not homicidal). See about a year ago I lost my mom to breast cancer during my last year of college. I felt lower than I'd ever thought I could be, then I saw this asshole with a barbed wire baseball bat and for some reason he made me smile for the first time in a long time.

On top of it, his backstory resonated a lot with me too, since he lost Lucille to cancer. We're both emotionally ruined assholes that have terrible senses of humor and because of that I'll always enjoy Negan. I know he's not gonna live forever in the story, but I've really enjoyed the journey he's been on throughout the comic. Thanks so much for the years of awesome writing, and to Charlie Adlard for the incredible art.

Sincerely
Sarah

We had a lot of thoughtful responses to the

Negan spotlight issue, with everyone taking something different away from the story. My first Letter Hacks was TWD #102, where I had the joy of responding to letters about Glenn's death (something I had no business doing). To see in real time how many of you have embraced the changes Negan made is really fascinating, and nails the joys of effective storytelling.

Part of the Negan magic (to me) is that no matter how emotionally ruined he was, he found a way to move past it.

For me, Negan is one of the most flawed and human characters in the book, which is why I like him. He seems honest with himself, and too honest with others, and I hope he comes off as endearing as I intend, despite what a horrible person he allowed himself to become. So I always appreciate hearing people have a soft spot for Negan.

I just read issue 174. I still want negan to die brutally. I don't feel for him at all.

Thank you for your time,
Alex
Queens, NY

Like I was saying in the last letter, Negan found a way to move past his evil ways. Sure, it took losing a war, being incarcerated for a long time (that was around two years or so), then escaping, killing the teenage boy who HELPED him escape, joining a bunch of skin suit-wearing psychos just to chop their leader's head off...

Fuck it, Maggie should've shot him.

Is this where I admit that in the original script Maggie shot him and Charlie asked me to change it? Is that true? Who knows?!

Firstly, I would like to tell you that I have started to read the comics since Michonne appeared on the tv show (Since then, I started reading it). I love Sophia and Carl's relationship and I think it could be more (I hope so). My favourite character is Michonne, and I was wondering if she is going to have a lasting romantic relationship in the comics. I think she has had a great development, especially in the TV show. But, in the comics, she is kind of lonely.

Regards,
María José

As seen this issue, there may be a cure for her loneliness, just not necessarily through romance.

And I would expect that there is some more romance ahead for her, eventually. I mean, everyone seems to be pairing off in this book...

Dear guys from The Walking Dead:

I just read the issue 174, and it just blew my mind, I was literally with chills while reading it. For me, the conversation between Maggie and Negan was devastating and raw because Glenn was always my favorite character (in comic and tv series) 'til he died. I remember reading

the issue 100 and closing it in shock because I could not believe how brutal was his death ... I always wanted Negan to die, I always wanted it to be Maggie who killed him.

Now after this, after reading "Here's Negan", I really stopped hating him. His history is very sad and one can really identify with the pain he has endured for so many years. I hope Rick will allow him to return to Alexandria and be the contribution he has shown he can be. Well, 74 numbers later I got the closure I was waiting for Glenn and Maggie's love history. Thanks for that.

P.S: I love Princess, I've been waiting for a character like that for years.

Daniel Rojas
Santiago de Chile

This Negan thing is complicated. Reading all your responses has made me reconsider whether I would've preferred if Negan lived or died. I mean, in the end, all he did was help unfuck a long chain of events that he started. Did that prepare Rick and Co. better for their eventual confrontation with the Whisperers? Sure. But was it necessary? Find out in our special April one-shot, THE WALKING DEAD: WHAT IF NEGAN WASN'T SUCH A DICK?

Heh. I do like this line of discussion. I hope that readers that are finding themselves suddenly startled by how much less they hate Negan now that they know his backstory and a little of the reasons for why he did what he did... maybe we can all take that into our everyday lives and be a little more understanding to one another.

I'm sorry, I mean, go to a website and buy stuff! (What am I doing?)

Mr. Kirkman (man, myth, legend):

I would like to begin by confessing my undying (get it) love for you and the beautiful comics you create. I adore Outcast almost as much as I do TWD. I just finished up issue #174 and I gotta say, thank you for not killing Negan! I had such fear my favorite scoundrel was gonna bite it via Maggie's revenge. My question for you is why did the interaction with Negan promote Maggie to kiss Dante? It was some interesting timing to say the least.

My thinking was that she's finally closed a book in her life. The saga of Glenn's death was finally over because she'd forgiven his killer. She left that house overcome with a sense of resolution and possibly optimism and realized at that time that she had feelings for Dante. It was supposed to be weird timing.

Can you imagine if she actually shot Negan, and THEN came out and smooched Dante?! That'd be a lot weirder.

In the same vein, I'd like to be the first to "ship" Princess and Negan! I don't know if or how they'll ever meet but from the moment Princess was introduced with her non-sweary dialogue the love connection was cemented in my mind! I love that Maggie might be able to create a new happy ending with Dante, and I hope Negan and even old man Rick will find love again too (excuse me while I resume the fetal position crying over Andrea). I CANNOT wait for the next issue! The Stormtrooper-y cover has been haunting me for months. I look forward to the new climatic magic you will undoubtedly unleash!

All my adoration,
Grace Staley
Cornfields of IL, USA

You think those soldiers look like stormtroopers?! Weird.

Hello Sean and Kirkman.

I just laughed out of my ass so hard watching Negan's

diarrhea panel. I couldn't help but picture the TV show Negan doing the same, with Maggie approaching silently to take him out. Hilarious as F.

Then again, Negan seems to have died for me in this issue. You cleverly turned him from something to FEAR, to a castrated eunuch, neutered by Rick. I don't see how he will be able to contribute to the comic anymore. I wished Maggie had her revenge at the tip of that bat.

When will we see Negan again? Nobody knows. But I would NEVER count him out. That's fucking crazy talk, Ricardo.

So PLEASE, give me back something I can hate with all my guts. That would be appreciated.

Ricardo, Colombia.

Say it ain't so, Ricardo? You can't just abandon a character because they've shown a new level of vulnerability! You'll grow to love the kinder, gentler Negan... if he ever shows up again.

Hello there,

I'm Here to ask you how you feel about pushing Sophia's character back into the shadows as if she isn't an important character with great development, She's been here since the beginning and Is the longest living Female In the series, I would really love to see you do something big with her character that's not revolving around Maggie or Carl, She's so important to a lot of fans and is My all time favorite character because I can relate to her in many ways, Please stop forgetting about her!!

Jacob Westrum

I'll agree she hasn't really had a moment to shine in a while, but it's certainly not a concerted effort to marginalize her. There's just a lot of characters in this book and a lot of story to tell. We'll get around to her eventually. Stay tuned.

Robert,

You did it! You made a Negan spotlight issue interesting. And you made A spotlight issue, at all! Maggie and Dante is one relationship I've been rooting for. This was still, even after all these years, the best comic of my day.

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

I considered making this the only letter we needed to run this month, but in lieu of that, you get the final word. We've finally unlocked the secret to making you happy.

Yeah, what the hell happened? We got a positive letter from Andrew J. Shaw?!

"New World Order" Part 3 hits in March! I think it's high time for you to meet Officer Mercer. Until then, be sure to catch the mid-season premiere of TWD on AMC, February 25th. Did anything big happen on the mid-season finale that you'd want to know more about?

Heh. See you next month.

-Robert Kirkman

Turn the page for a first look at OBLIVION SONG #1, Robert's new title with artist Lorenzo De Felici. It hits stores March 7th. If you're interested, please pre-order it with your local comic shop, and be on the lookout for our Deluxe Collector's Edition variant cover, which comes with a statue (and other cool stuff)!

-Sean Mackiewicz

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

In the words of Rick Grimes, "Wow, that was quite touching... Heartwarming, even." We've never seen a reunion between characters that have been separated since before the world changed, and these two women are only beginning to scratch the surface of what they've survived in the years apart. Also, Officer Mercer... uh... well, less said about him and Siddiq, the better. Until next month...

But oh, man... next month...

Hey, people! Kirkman here! I just wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for the responses to this arc thus far. Elodie is already quickly becoming a fan favorite character, and the Commonwealth seems to have all of you as excited as it has us! It's so rewarding to know that over ONE-HUNDRED-AND-SEVENTY-FIVE issues into this epic journey we're all taking together, we've still got some surprises up our sleeves that work. So, thank you for all the kind words. Now let's hope we don't screw things up!

Kirkman and Co.:

Kudos, folks, on what, in my opinion, was one of the best books of the last twelve months. The fact that we finally get the tiniest glimpse of the Commonwealth had me on the edge of my seat the entire issue. Then, when they see that wall of photos and notices at the end, I was like, "holy crap, that's cool and might be worth a look later, but let's move on..." Well, you guys went against my wishes and showed me point blank that what I want isn't always best! The fact that Michonne's son (grown now?) might actually be living in this city of over fifty thousand people has me extremely giddy!

Daughter!

Yeah! This isn't the TV show! TV show Michonne had one son, confirmed to be dead. Comic book Michonne had two daughters THOUGHT to be dead.

I seriously cannot wait to get a full look at this new place and their way of life. Could this place be for real? Could it actually be a good place for our band of merry survivors? Something tells me yes, it will be, but if Kirkman has shown us anything, it's whether they're at Woodbury, Alexandria, the Kingdom, or the Hilltop, there is always some asshole lurking around the corner to fuck things up for everyone. After all, trouble and killings seem to follow Rick and his crew.

Oh, man, SOOO many assholes everywhere. Just when you think something is going to be cool and things are going to work out, some asshole just has to shit on things. Like Sebastian. That guy is quickly climbing the TWD Asshole Power Rankings.

I'm hoping we focus on the Commonwealth exclusively until this story resolves itself. The fact that there is such a great distance tells me that either we are about to toss the previous locales, or something is going to happen to this place because of someone's stupid decisions. There is no way a

narrative can be maintained at Hilltop, Alexandria, the Kingdom, AND the Commonwealth! My bet is someone has somehow discovered how to use a nuclear weapon and they will use it to blast a big chunk of the cast into the stone age. That's about the only way I see you guys using #200 to top #100. Nuclear war...

You had me until nuclear war. (But what IS going on with our country's nuclear arsenal? You know what, let's not even go there.)

Yeah... let's not. I can confirm that there will definitely NOT be any nuclear war in issue #200.

Keep up the good work, and kudos for keeping a substantial letters page. It is always a highlight to read each month and it is one of those things that almost every other book out there is sorely lacking.

Lonnie Henderson II
Untitled Nerd Network
Chattanooga, TN

Thanks, Lonnie! These do take a bit of time to do, although I do make Sean do most of the heavy lifting. But they're fun! I really value having this somewhat direct line of communication with the readers dedicated enough to read this letters column... and it's also fun when I seemingly spoil Morgan's role in Fear The Walking Dead, and that gets turned into click-bait articles all over the internet. Wait, no... that last part isn't fun.

To mr Kirkman:

Hello, i just finished issue 175, greatest so far in the New World Order volume! I was a little disappointed in the Commonwealths means of transportation though. I was expecting that the commonwealth would have found a way of pumping gasoline. It's too late now. But it would be cool if Eugene suggested they should find an oil field.

I mean, the distance between the Commonwealth and Ricky G's group is quite large. So access to working cars again would really smooth things over.

Keep up the great work!

From: Erik in a cold place called Sweden

I'd be surprised if we ever saw the world revert to gas-powered anything going forward. It just doesn't seem sustainable. We've answered letters in the past about gasoline degradation over time, and by now, fuel produced before the outbreak would be useless.

And, man... you guys seem really obsessed with the distance between The Commonwealth and the rest of the communities... maybe the world is getting SMALLER

Or the world is FLAT!

Hey TWD team!

I have been waiting the NWO arc for a few months now and 100% it lived up to the hype!

For the last year or so I've been wondering something and it has been eating me alive but I've been waiting for the perfect time to ask. Comic 175 is that time...

Approximately how many humans do you figure are left on earth? We know at least 50,000+ but will we discover more mega huge communities like this?

Isn't not knowing MORE fun? I seriously have NO idea, and I'm fine with it. Less for me to keep track of and risk screwing up, to be honest.

Yes, the name of the game as a writer is not limiting yourself for the future. In my opinion, at least. I'd never answer this in a letters column because if later I decide they're going to find a place with millions of people, you can say, "No, wait! In the letters column for #177 you said this!" I also intentionally mislead in the letters column from time to time to steer eagle-eyed readers away from upcoming plot threads. That's fun. At some point someone should take it upon themselves to read all the Letter Hacks over the years and see if they can figure out when I knew of an upcoming storyline and was clearly misleading people, and when I just changed my mind or came up with a new idea.

I will point out that I did hint about killing Andrea a few times in the letters columns in the year or two leading up to her death to make people think, "Well, if she really was going to die, he'd never hint at it in the letters column." LOOK OUT! You never know what spoilers can be mined from this column!

If i had to guess before this comic I would say around 1 million humans left but after reading 175 I'm even more interested to hear how many TWD team thinks.

Thanks for answering
Drew Schroeder
Las Vegas, NV

It's about 1.6 million humans total, worldwide. There are VAST dead zones out there. There's like TEN people living in all of Montana. Canon.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

Let me start by saying I loved issue #175, Lance seems like a total douche but the rest of the commonwealth soldiers don't seem so bad! I never imagined that we would ever see a community with 50000 people in it, amazing! And that twist at the end? Come on!

Anyways, My question to you is how long was the journey from Alexandria to Ohio? Lance asks the question and I guess its answered off panel. You see, I've been working on a timeline for the walking dead including the comics, games, Novels, and everything else considered canon. And let me tell you Mr. Kirkman, you are not making it easy! I see what you're up to, avoiding mentioning any specific dates or time frames any chance you get! But I'm a big nerdy nerd and I find my ways. Either way I look forward to trying to piece together this tricky timeline for 100s of issues to come.

Thanks,
Bradley
Toronto Ontario

Let's use Google Maps and crack this. The group left Alexandria, and we know that they passed through Pittsburgh on their way to Ohio. The

direct route to Pittsburgh is 231 miles, which would take 79 hours on foot. Now, that's a direct route, not accounting for safety precautions or getting diverted anywhere along the way or sleep. So, let's just say it took 4-5 days for that leg. Then from Pittsburgh to Somewhere, Ohio (I picked Akron because that follows that same trajectory pretty well), it's 102 miles direct, which would take 34 hours to travel. So, the answer I'm giving you is around eight days, less by horseback or wagon.

I support none of this. It was anywhere between two and two hundred days. Keep it VAGUE!!! What Sean says (non-italics) is NOT canon. ;-) #whywouldheputahashtaginacomic?

Sean hates his job. Not canon...?

TWD Team,

Sean Mackiewicz, Bill Sienkiewicz, got a good ring to it.

Greatly looking forward to eleven more months of Bill's art. In particular, Negan's cover (surely there's a Negan cover) and Negan's return. Right, Robert? Here's to fifteen more years of THE WALKING DEAD.

Hoyt,
Easley, SC

There will definitely be a Negan cover. More Negan in the comics? Less certain.

Heh.

Should do another issue that's just Negan cooking food on an open fire...

Recently in the comic we've had an all-new Mexican-American character (the Princess, of course,) LGBT discussions, and also when the time jump happened we got Siddiq, an Arab-American, and I've actually been wondering: if you would've been making Walking Dead today, in the year 2018, would that original survivor camp have say, a Mexican-American or gay/lesbian character instead of just a group of straight white and black people? The early issues feel very "2000s" where there's only just white and black people, and now there're Mexican-Americans, gays and lesbians, etc. I appreciate the diversity in the story, it's great to see people from many different backgrounds survive and rebuild civilization, but back then you being diverse in the comic just seemed to be making Michonne a really cool character, not LGBT discussions. It's been a while since this series first started and it's great to see you become more diverse in the story, but I guess early on you hadn't really thought of representing gays and lesbians?

Anyways, thank you for this awesome comic that I've been reading for four years and plan to keep reading until it's finished.

Nick

Frankly? I was a dumb 23-year-old white kid from a rural, sparsely diverse area when this series started. I've grown and improved as a person as this series has progressed, and that's more or less happened in clear view of this readership. In the same way that I used my relationship with my father as a template for the Rick/Carl relationship at first, but now am able to play off my relationship with my children for that relationship... I have evolved and adapted in all ways.

Were I to start this comic today? It would have been vastly more diverse. Is that pandering to a modern push to have more diversity in media as it is somehow

negatively portrayed far too often? No. It is a course correction to a massive wrong that media has done to society.

According to Wikipedia (I'm lazy) the Atlanta area (as of 2014) breaks down like this:

*Black 51.4%
White 41.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander 3.7%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race) 4.7%*

So why would the cast be more diverse if I were to do the book now? TO BE MORE ACCURATE TO REAL LIFE.

I strive to be more diverse in all the projects I do because it makes the projects better, and the overwhelming amount of white faces that have always dominated all forms of visual entertainment... sucks. Representation matters, soap box, blah blah blah.

And to be completely honest, my new project OBLIVION SONG, in stores the same day as this issue... is diverse, there's a lot of representation... but it's probably still not enough. I could have done better.

Dear Kirkman and Company,

First off, I really love the direction you're taking the newer issues of The Walking Dead. A new world order is kinda good. Concerts? Sports? Civilization? Uniforms??? I'm excited to see what else is going on at Commonwealth.

You'll get to see more of their way of life soon.

Alright. Michonne's daughter. I've always wondered what happened with her and her daughters because really the Michonne mini-series really raised more questions than answers. I'm also excited that Michonne is getting more attention. She's a pretty great character, and I loved her evolution.

I don't really understand what you were trying to do with Princess. Why is she there? She doesn't really advance the plot. I don't know. Maybe she will in the future.

Give her a chance!

Ok, so Eugene. Eugene has always been one of my favorite characters. When you first meet him, he's a coward. A liar who was too scared to fend for himself.

Also, a little bit of a pervert—but not in a completely unacceptable way.

I remember having the big twist about Eugene not being a scientist spoiled for me. I hated him since. But he's proven himself over the course of No Way Out, and All Out War, and of course we see a new and improved Eugene at A New Beginning. He lost weight, gained confidence and courage, and lost the mullet.

I'd really love to see Eugene being a badass. Like, his own scene where he just takes out 15 walkers in an enclosed space by himself. Just to show how much of a badass he's become. It would be really cool in my opinion.

I don't know if we'll ever see that. He's a mental badass who's smart enough to rely on the more physically capable badasses that surround him.

He did a LITTLE bit of killing in "No Way Out" if I recall correctly... and recently in "The Whisperer War"... but Eugene is NOT that kind

of badass... and he doesn't need to be.

Lastly, I just want to see a backstory for Jesus Please. A Jesus novel, or Image+ or his own comic. Or just one issue dedicated to his backstory. It would be awesome, I'd bet.

Thanks,
Edan H
Montreal, Canada

I hear you. I love Jesus as much as everyone else. We might do this eventually, but there are no plans for it right now.

Unless we're misleading you, and it's already halfway drawn.

Dear mr. kirkman and crew,

Long time reader first time writer. Just want to start off by saying keep up the great work! But the main reason I've finally decided to write in is to ask you why there is no prominent Marine character? As a United States Marine myself it's my belief that if anyone had the skills to survivor the apocalypse and lead it would be a Marine yet we don't see any characters. Maybe the leader of the new community could have some sort of Marine background since he has managed to mass a working military, but what do I know.

Best regards,
Samuel williamson
USMC JACKSONVILLE NC

I agree with you that the odds of a Marine surviving in this world would be pretty high. It's ridiculous that we haven't seen one thus far. I think Mercer just became a former Marine. Letters columns are fun.

So I just finished 175. When the full page panel shows Michonne approaching the board I knew that it was going to be someone; however, to see the picture and then the girls name, I was floored. My daughter is named Elodie; being from Louisiana, she is descended from Irish, Italian, and Cajun roots. Her great-great grandmother was named that. It's a pretty rare name, so I was just wondering, where did you get the name from? Also, in your head do you say it with the quick El-uh-d? Or is more French, L-O-D?

Corey
New Orleans, Louisiana

I've been saying L-O-D, which tracks with her sister having a French name, as well. I believe Robert first came up with the names during the production of the Telltale Michonne series, in which Elodie and Colette appear.

I knew this story was coming up way back then, so when we were working with Telltale on that series, I made sure I was the one to name them since I didn't want them to be the only characters in the comics that I didn't name. Oh, and I've been saying L-O-D, as well... is that how they pronounced it in the game?

Yep!

We'll see you back for "New World Order" Part 4 in April! More surprises at the Commonwealth—and the Hilltop!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Don't spoil too much!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

If you're not won over by Princess after this issue, I don't know what to tell you... maybe you're beyond convincing. As for the Commonwealth, many of you have guessed something sinister was going on, and while it's not as glaringly obvious as Woodbury or the Whisperers, we're starting to peel back the layers on how the Governor governs... and Michonne is going to have some strong opinions about it. More next issue!

Y'know... it can't be all happy reunions all the time, Sean! There's gotta be SOME drama!!! Speaking of drama... let's answer some letters!

Hey Kirkman and team!

As always, huge fan of your work and thank you for keeping me tuned in month to month for the wild ride. As one of the many fans you mentioned being ecstatic about the win for Michonne in #175s cliffhanger, my question is for you Mr. Kirkman about our dearest sexy black samurai.

For how long have you planned on introducing Elodie/a surviving family member of Michonne's? The loss of her family has been a part of Michonne's character for as long as we've known her. Has it been part of the writing of her character all along with a sticky note on your desk that reads "Michonne will find a family member thought dead (eventually)" when you wrote issue 19? The earliest I can imagine it was conceived was sometime before the first issue of AoW when you knew the timeskip was coming. Got any insight for us?

And a fun question! If you could pick any issue before 127 without a subtitle, what issue would it be and what would you have named it?

This is what you consider fun? This is work! #108: Ezekiel Has A Tiger.

Thanks for taking the time to answer! Can't wait to see what the New World Order has in store!

Sincerely,
Kyle from Canada, ON
#WheresTWDMap

I don't know exactly when I came up with the plan for Elodie being alive and well in the Commonwealth, but it was a LONG time ago. Michonne being gone after the time jump in #127 was partially designed to remind readers about her daughters, so that people would remember them when we got to this point. ALSO, when I wrote the episode in season 3 of TWD that featured the flashbacks to Michonne's son and how he died, I knew that was going to affect this aspect of the comic. So that was before issue #100 for sure... but I definitely did NOT have it in mind when I wrote issue #19.

Hey my name is Scott,

I'm writing to you from some town in Ontario. I was wondering if you guys could ship your comics to Canada because I would totally pay 25 bucks (usd) a month your paperback issues but they don't ship to Canada. Instead I have to use a rando website. I was wondering why you guys don't ship to Canada and if you will/might in the future. Thanks, Scott.

Hey Scott, we totally ship to Canada. Diamond distributes comics throughout all of North America and other English-speaking territories. For anyone having trouble finding comics in their area, check out ComicShopLocator.com for help finding a brick & mortar location.

Dear Kirkman and friends,

Lance Hornsby, Maxwell Hawkins, Pamela Milton. Out of curiosity, where do you come up with these names?

Colton Taff
Springfield, MO

Isn't not knowing MORE fun? I seriously have a couple letters this month on how well you come up with stellar names for assholes. Any advice?

When it comes to names like Lance and, say... Spencer... those just come off the top of my head because they SEEM like the kinds of names assholes have. Sorry to any real-life Lances or Spencers out there (but think about it, are you an asshole?). Maxwell seems like an aloof name to me... same with Hawkins. No relation to Matt Hawkins of Top Cow fame. I usually try to avoid using any names similar to people I know so that they don't think I have fantasies of them dying in horrible ways. That one slipped through. After a while, I started to notice most of the names were people I've gone to school with, random old neighbors, and other names I've encountered in real life... I was realizing the limited list of names I was pulling from. That's when I started going through my spam folder in my email. Spam comes from all kinds of names I'd never think of... so that's the source of some names.

Dear Robert,

Wow. Your comic series (TWD) has shown that not every comic book has to be about superheroes. I have only been reading the series for a month or so, and I have only read the whole run once, but DANG is it good! You manage to keep a gripping and exciting story, even though you've killed

off like almost everyone you come across, and everyone is happy and are living in communities instead of roughing it in the wild. Even Michonne has her daughter back! MICHONNE! But anywho, I love what your doing. It's great. (When it comes to Carl, I'm Team Sophia, all the way.) But, I noticed a inconsistency in your OHMYFREAKINGGOSHES amazing comic. In issue 28 page 5, The Governor tells a story about how the news building had a bunch of survivors, they all tried to kill each other, yada yada yada. But the moral was that you can't run a community without entertainment, or they'll try to kill each other. But after the time skip after all-out war, the communities have been fine for YEARS and nobody has had any real entertainment besides working their butts off. Ehh, who cares. This comic is great. Keep it going. But I kinda liked the art from volume 1 better than the rest but y'all do y'all.

Harrison Brown

You think the Governor ACTUALLY knew how to run a successful community? Come on, Harrison! I know you're only a month deep, but you can't trust that lunatic. However... the Commonwealth offers plenty of entertainment options, and we'll soon see more on those. But, like, not an inconsistency at all!

For sure. Alexandria was a community of people who survived the apocalypse far longer than the Governor or his people ever did. So, for them, a quiet afternoon on the porch was more than enough entertainment to fulfill their lives.

Hey Walking dead team!

So wow, I just about cried when Michonne and her daughter reunited! I was hoping she'd finally get a good moment after everything!

Now for the Commonwealth, I'm starting to really not like Lance, yea he could be funny, but he's obnoxious when he needs to be serious. Plus a total hard ass, but I guess he has to be. But I'm a little uneasy with that punishment talk he had with Stephanie.

What's funny is that since Lance was introduced, there are at least three characters that are more obnoxious, condescending or pompous. What a group!

It's going to be FUN!

Now Pamela, I appreciate her taking Michonne to see her daughter, but that welcome banter needs to change. Every place has its flaws, but you won't get anyone when you say it's absolutely perfect.

I can't wait to see more, you guys are really kicking it!

See you next month!

Andi Tiscareno
El Paso, Texas

Thanks so much, Andi. I think Pamela believing her community is perfect is a pretty big tell for what her personality is. I don't think anyone but her and her closest people actually believe that. The Commonwealth is going to have far more layers to it than any other community we've encountered thus far.

Dear TWD,

These last 2 issues have been great! It feels like I'm reading TWD again. I'm going to be honest with you here, ever since you did the time jump ahead a couple of years, the series just hasn't been quite the same. Sure, a lot changes went down, which is understandable. Stories grow, characters develop. All of that is good, but it just didn't FEEL like the Walking Dead. I was bored with most issues. I seriously debated dropping the book a few times, but the collector in me wouldn't let me do that. So I powered through it. Sure, there were some very enjoyable issues here and there, but it wasn't as interesting and capturing as it once was.

But these last 2 issues? Holy crap! Now that's what I'm talking about. It feels like I'm reading The Walking Dead again. The magic is back! I can only hope you can continue down that same path.

That was the perfect way to celebrate 175 issues. I'm actually looking forward to reading The Walking Dead again and that's how I like it.

Keep up the good work!
Matt Webster

Keep up our streak of two good issues in the past four years? Our pleasure!

Yeah, good to know that the bar is so low! Hopefully, we can have a good solid run of good issues here before we slide back into mediocrity. (And, man... you didn't like any of the big Negan arc told over those issues? Or the Whisperers?! I mean... come on! Andrea's death?! I'm really, REALLY trying here!)

Thank you for making me happy for once.

Mary

You're welcome. This is such a rare sentiment, I had to share it.

This makes me feel good. I honestly thought people were going to HATE this Michonne storyline. I'm happy people are welcoming of a little positivity in the TWD universe.

We're back for "New World Order" Part 5 in May! Big, life-changing decisions are made!

Oh, and I guess while I have space, I'll just say thank you! We just launched my new series OBLIVION SONG with artist/co-creator Lorenzo De Felici and superstar colorist Annalisa Leoni, and so far it's a pretty huge hit. The sales are phenomenal, and I don't think we get to the level we're at without a few of you giving it a shot. So, thank you if you tried it, I hope you'll grow to love it as much as this fine title here. Maybe I'll do another new comic someday.

-Robert Kirkman

Please check out the preview of CRUDE, created by Steve Orlando & Garry Brown—think of Taken in Russia, then turn up the intensity. Hits stores next week, 4/11!

-Sean Mackiewicz

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

It's really cool to see Michonne find some peace. Don't think she's been this happy since she met Ezekiel way back when, and there's been a LOT of soul searching in-between. Almost as cool? Seeing Eugene with a samurai sword. That pretty much guarantees we make an action figure of him.

Hey! There's an idea!

What's going on in the world of THE WALKING DEAD right now? Season 8 is winding down, leading to the big Fear The Walking Dead season 4 premiere, and Morgan's appearance on that show. What does it mean? What does it lead to?! Awesome stuff, that's what.

Overkill's The Walking Dead game is getting closer and closer to release. They've started sending out trailers already, so go to skybound.com or thewalkingdead.com and look around.

We're building to bigger and better things celebrating our 15th anniversary this year. Get ready for some big news and special stuff debuting at Comic-Con in San Diego this July. It's gonna be a big year!

Now, let's see what you had to say about a past issue!

Damn, all this progress since the outbreak and yet apparently nobody can get some in this brave new world. Truly a shame.

Oh and all the other stuff was excellent too.

But seriously, I posit that there are "SOO many assholes everywhere", as so eloquently put in letter hacks, because we've got a bunch of sexually frustrated people running around trying to keep the peace. Maggie deserves some relief (though I'm not so sure about Sebastian). Dante is right though, she has nothing to be sorry about. With utmost respect to Glenn.

Mike Gronemeyer
Rochester, NY

This comic used to have more sex when everyone had no safety, no security, and basically thought they were going to die at any given moment. Makes complete sense. Now that they're completely protected, to the point that Maggie and Dante are trying to hump in a shack SURROUNDED by axes,

assault rifles and very phallic spears and bayonets... well, if that ain't just the beautiful fucking poetry of the human condition, my friend, I don't know what is.

I'll just say there's a LOT more sex going on than we're showing... and in the last ten issues or so, we've shown more than usual. Look, guys, I'm a prude, okay? There, I said it. Go read Sex Criminals and leave me alone.

Dear TWD Team,

I have two questions for you guys today. Number one, I just finished rereading the comics for like the tenth time, and was wondering if Rick will ever get his old look back? I mean his new look isn't all that bad but, I liked his old look a little better. Just a wondering though.

The look where he had two hands? Or like, do you mean is he ever going to shave again? He's been like this for fifty-two issues, which is the longest Rick's ever had a consistent look. Maybe he is getting too comfortable. And also, maybe next issue he starts wearing aviators... even indoors and at night.

Also, will the other Alexandrians ever see or go to the Commonwealth or the Commonwealth people go to them?

Thanks,
JT Kosienksi
Westminster, CO

They are there already. More important question is: what happens once they get there?

Indeed. And Rick's look NEVER CHANGES AGAIN! I mean... he'll look like a skeleton, eventually. Does that count?

Dear Kirkman and friends,

I just finished reading 177 and the Letter Hacks that follow. Gotta say something.

You mention that diversity and representation are good and that they make things better. Yet you immediately go on to say that, while Oblivion Song has somewhat better implemented some of these ideas, you could still be doing better. So far, with the Commonwealth, representation has been... kinda shitty. Pamela, Lance, Sebastian,

Maxwell, Stephanie, Matt, the girl at the picnic, the guy at the end of 177, the soldiers who came back from the Magenta Swarm. All white. If I'm being frank, Mercer is the only person I've noticed who isn't white and has a labelled name so far. Past that, the only non-white people I've really seen have been Mercer and the Muslim woman on the wall of pictures. Yes, I understand that our group is diverse: white man, black woman, Latina woman, Asian lesbian woman, I forget what Magna is, and Muslim man. But if you're introducing this many new characters, why did most of them have to be white?

Tones for Stephanie were off in #176, so to be clear, she is African-American. As for your larger point... that many white folks in Commonwealth positions of power? Definitely on purpose.

Now, for all I know, this could be purposeful. Maybe it's a part of the story. Or maybe you're going by real-life demographics of sorts. Or maybe you're introducing a whole slew of other characters that aren't white in the next 3 or so issues. Or maybe all these white characters are just to repopulate the already massive roster. I want to reserve judgment and think that you really mean it when you say you want to do better with diversity and representation. But you gotta act on your words. And I hope that's what I see in the upcoming issues: an explanation or more diversity.

Sincerely,
C from Missouri

The story of the Commonwealth is definitely about class, and you can't really explore class without recognizing the roll race plays into it. The majority of the ruling class of the Commonwealth is white because that's a reflection of the ruling class we have in America. There's a point to it.

But please, don't let my attempts to make this a diverse series lead to complaints that this series isn't diverse enough. That's ridiculous. We're doing better than most. No one is perfect, and the battle with my straight male dumbness is constant. So cut me some slack.

Finished issue 177, and I absolutely love Mercer. I am excited to see if he will turn out to be a villain, or if we just caught him at a bad time... But I was wondering about the population of the Commonwealth. I know you have already used a couple questions about this, but I have statistics to back me!

You have said before that the walkers outnumber the humans by 5,000 to 1. This adds up close enough when you said that there were about 1.6 million people left in the world. Assuming Issue 1 took place in 2003, for that is when it was released, the population of America was about 290 million people in America. With the 5,000:1 ratio, there would be about 58,100 people LIVING in the United

States alone. The Commonwealth claims to have 50,000 people living there... You did say that the population is so spread out that there are "Only like ten people in Montana.". So I am wondering if the commonwealth actually holds most people alive in America. Are they lying about their numbers so our group doesn't attack? Anyway, I love the idea of the population being so spread out. It explains why we could go so long without seeing a new character, but happen to come across a community of 50,000. Awesome idea. Love the series, and I can't wait to get the rest of the art work by Bill Sienkiewicz, So lets just not kill off Negan, Sophia, or Carl and all will be right in the world. The rest can go.

Aiden C. G.
from: Lexington Kentucky
Yup. Lexington... Kirkman...

LOUD GROAN.

LOUDER GROAN.

(Long silence. So long you almost walk away, until--)

HEAD BANGING ON WALL UNTIL CRACKING SOUND IS HEARD.

Yeah, come on, guys! Don't get lost in the numbers here. I throw numbers like that out in letters columns as an off-hand joke. They're not meant to be canon.

That said, even if all your numbers were right, people are having children in the Commonwealth at a pretty healthy rate. So some of those 50,000 could have been born after the zombie apocalypse began.

But again... GROAN.

Dear Kirkman, Adlard, and all the people who make The Walking Dead possible,

Your friendly neighborhood French reader here. A pal and I had questions, if not concerns about a key element of the new arc you're developing. We're big fans, from the beginning, and you know, we've seen that damn cake back in issue 176 (BTW, Majestic last panel, like always) and couldn't help but think that, how can the Commonwealth afford to bake one chocolate cake, or even run a whole damn bakery?

A simpler cake like shortbread would have been a mere detail, even a baguette would have been less incongruous...

Louise here: Seriously Edgar? You had to go full French right there

But a chocolate cake! I know you people can only use black and white, and it was the most obvious ScottMcCloudish way of having us, readers, understanding that what Elodie was carrying indeed was a cake, and yeah, Michonne's daughter bakes cake for a living, but come on, the semantics here are huge! It

puts all the few we know about this community in perspective! Do they have like, a cocoa economy? I mean, modern pastry as we know it, was invented at the beginning of the 20th century, shaped in the 50's and only possible in a globalized economy. You know what they say, to make one chocolate bar, we need today resources from 7 different countries, from Cuba to Sweden. And by the time our folks meet with those new stormtroopers look-alike, all the ingredients available we'd normally use, like, lecithin would already have rotten away on forgotten shelves. The only way they'd have to bake, would be some old-school cake bakery, 19th century style, with only water, eggs, and flour. But they'd still need cocoa beans! What brings, our very question: how come they acquire cocoa beans in the middle of the fucking zombie apocalypse aftermath?! Do they trade supplies with communities, only so they can afford them? But, considering their scarcity, wouldn't such beans become all the more valuable? Could it be, that their new world order is in fact based on a system of trades using cocoa beans as currency? Or does their network include a community who only grows cacao plants? Imagine if such a community existed and was governed by, let's say, Negan hidden twin brother. That would definitely be the "Zombies and the fuckity chocolate factory"!

Louise again: As much as I would love that scenario I think it isn't too hard to synthesize a chocolate flavor, and in a post-apocalyptic world people won't complain too much that it doesn't taste exactly the same

Best regards and sincerely yours,

Louise and Edgar, from the other side of the sea

Yes, that's definitely a chocolate cake. And what you're saying certainly makes sense, but what you're overlooking, my fine French friends, is the existence of Hershey, Pennsylvania: "The Sweetest Place on Earth"; also, "Chocolatetown, USA", and not to be confused with "Chocolate City" (two different kinds of chocolate). This town was founded by Milton Hershey--the candy guy--and produces all that great candy (the streets seriously smell like chocolate), and is also home to an amusement park called Hershey World. Long story short: when shit went down, the Hershey workers emerged with America's largest supply of cocoa powder, and now peddle bricks of hard brown to bakers across America. But you and I know it won't last forever... so that upside-down chocolate cake? More of that beautiful poetry of the human-fucking-condition.

Uh... what Sean said.

Kirkman and Company,

I just read issue 177 and wanted to congratulate you on creating such a great book.

This new arc is full of surprises and has me thinking of all sorts of resolutions to the storyline. I'm uncertain how this will all affect the future of the book. I do have my worries. If Rick's group create an alliance with this new-found community, I fear the comic might become stale. The book works because it tells of how hard it is to survive in an apocalyptic world; a stable new order could undermine what makes this comic so interesting.

On a positive note, the arc has been extremely intriguing so far. When handled properly, a change like this can do great things. This is certainly unlike anything we've seen before.

With regards to Michonne and her daughter, I'm glad they've been reunited. It brings a glimpse of hope in a gloomy world.

I expect next month's issue will be another great one.

Thanks,
Lukas Seifert
Malta, Europe

So, right now, we're doing pretty good, but at any moment we could start sucking or ascend into greatness? I'll take those odds!

Yeah, Lukas! Every story has the potential to be boring, or awesome if done right... so we'll try to do it right. By the way, I loved WITCH DOCTOR, guys... it's cool to see you're both sharing one name now.

How likely is Rick to die?

Nilmar

How long are you willing to read in order to find out?

It's only a matter of time...

Next issue we reach the end of "New World Order"! I can't tell you how Rick will react to his new guests... but what I can tell you is he'll look SUPER COOL doing it in his brand-new shades!

Can't wait to see it! Until then, keep fighting the good fight, people!

-Robert Kirkman

Turn the page and check out the preview of our new series, STELLAR, by Joseph Keatinge and Bret Blevins. Based on a character created by Robert and Marc Silvestri, Stellar is a bounty hunter that patrols broken worlds, filled with crashed spaceships, fast-talking aliens, and ageless wonders. It hits stores June 13th!

-Sean Mackiewicz

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Well, that was a fun first outing for our two community leaders as our "New World Order" concludes. By now Rick has met enough new communities that he's awfully efficient in establishing boundaries... and it looks like the Commonwealth hasn't faced the same level of adversity. But is there a secret badass lurking within this new Governor, as she implies? Or is she the next in line to underestimate Rick Grimes? And since we love questions here in Letter HACKS: What is the Commonwealth's true history? Who founded it? Can we take Pamela seriously since she ever-so-casually sports a pith helmet? Find out in future issues of THE WALKING DEAD! (Or not!)

They'll all just have to keep reading, Sean. Welcome back, dear readers! There's so much going on in the greater THE WALKING DEAD universe that it's almost hard to keep track of. Fear The Walking Dead is in its fourth (and best) season, running on AMC right now. It's great. New showrunners Andrew Chambliss and Ian Goldberg, working alongside Scott Gimple, have been doing an amazing job on this season.

The fourth season of the Telltale series is being produced right now and will be launched very soon. Watching it come together behind the scenes has been amazing. This season is a culmination of the story that started in season one, and really brings it all together in a spectacular fashion.

Overkill's The Walking Dead is on track for release this coming October. It's a co-op first person shooter that's going to really blow people away. It's the biggest TWD game ever produced. It's been in production for years and the amount of love that the teams at Starbreeze and Overkill have been pouring into this game will be on glorious display when it launches. I'm very excited for you ladies and gentlemen to get your hands on it.

In comics, while this is the end of the "NEW WORLD ORDER" storyline... I think you can tell by the end of this issue... it's really a beginning, as our story of the Commonwealth is just getting started. I'm VERY excited for you guys to see where this is going in the coming months.

Anyway... there's a LOT to look forward to... almost as much as I'm looking forward to reading these letters.

Robert, Sean and Co,

First time writer, long time reader. Here in Ireland, I have to travel 27 miles to my nearest comic store for my monthly fix, but its totally worth it for you guys.

Just read #178 and wanted to say Princess absolutely kicks ass! I'm totally sensing some sexual chemistry between her and the governor's son, Sebastian. The way she pokes him with the butt of her spear; like she totally doesn't want to hurt him too much. Am I right? Am I right?

I don't see any sexual tension between those two. One's just teaching the other what happens when they're an asshole.

Yeah, no... no sexual tension there... just tension.

I'm not totally in love with Elodie yet. Seems like she's holding back. Are we going to get a flashback to her dad and sister's deaths or her life before the Commonwealth?

We don't use flashbacks very often, so not likely... but maybe you'll come around with some more time.

Oh, and my last prediction... Rick, Michonne and now with Mercer will overthrow the Commonwealth regime. Right? I mean, its kinda their jam.

Dealing with the Commonwealth is more complicated than you think. We'll be painting a more complete picture in upcoming issues.

Anyway, just wanted to say thanks for TWD. I feel like we've been friends for so long (though I'll never forgive you for killing off Andrea!).

Much love from the land of the leprechauns.

Peter
Co. Donegal, Ireland

I'll never forgive me for killing Andrea, either.

Every issue lately has me wanting to write in and give some feedback. I generally try to wait at least a year between letters, usually quite a bit longer than that. How often do you fellows feel like receiving mail from an individual is personally appropriate to you? Even if it is about a project that a person genuinely enjoys, at what level would it be kind of creepy? Just something I've been curious about. By this

point, I'm sure you've attracted at least a couple people that make the correspondence aspect feel uncomfortable.

We love folks that write every issue, or those that check-in once a year. Quality of email is king. Bringing a new perspective about the story or world is always great. Asking a question no one's asked (which is difficult after 180 issues) will normally get you ahead of the pack. Making us laugh helps, too. And for those of you who write just to point out our mistakes: someone on Twitter has already beaten you to it.

You could write daily about the comic and it wouldn't be creepy. You could write one creepy letter ever... and that would be creepy. It's all about content, as Sean said.

As for the recent New World Order storyline, it's pretty great. I've been getting a kick out of Princess since she has showed up. Seeing her take out half a dozen armored guys was dope. I can't wait to hopefully see just her and Jesus smashing their way through some missions later on.

Everything with Michonne's daughter has been amazing. I didn't see that reunion coming, and it is awesome. It's wild watching Elodie slowly come to understand who the Michonne is that we have all grown with since issue #19. I have a feeling she'll see her mother going full blast at some point in the near future.

After almost fifteen years, *The Walking Dead* is still the first book I read in the pile when that Wednesday rolls around. Outside of the television shows, video games, toys, clothing, etc., to me it's that black and white horror comic that I've enjoyed from the start. Hard to believe it's not too far from 200 issues. It's been a fun journey.

Darrick Patrick
Dayton, Ohio

I don't mean to get all sentimental, but it is important to me that all of you know how much we appreciate all the support. Yes, we are not too far from 200 issues, and yes, there's a whole lot of THE WALKING DEAD stuff out there being enjoyed by a whole lot of people... and none of that would be possible without you, the ones reading this, the ones writing in, the ones who supported the comic so it could grow into what it's become, whether that support started 15 long years ago, or last month, you people are the best!

Hello Kirkman & TWD team

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy all of the Bill Sienkiewicz variant covers that you have been putting out so far. Please don't ever stop making these! Any chance you can nudge Bill to make a Shiva or a walker cover? See you at SDCC!

Sean Risley

No plans for a Shiva or walker cover; with so many characters to choose from, we had to leave some favorites out. Bill has already wrapped up all 12 covers celebrating the 15th anniversary, but I don't think you'll be disappointed with the faces you'll be seeing.

I've been a fan of Bill's for as long as I've been reading comics. There was a Wolverine poster on the wall of the comic shop I first stepped foot in. I was mesmerized by it. It's been a true honor having him grace this series with his glorious portraits. Let's have him back for the 30th anniversary!!

Long time listener, first time caller.

Just wanted to send a quick note- I am very impressed by New World Order so far. The juxtaposition of the heartfelt reunion of Michonne and her daughter, with the incisive look into politics and social order inherent in humanity is making NWO my favorite story arc so far. Our heroes Rick, Michonne, and Maggie have carved their vision of society into the zombified world, and I supported them with each step. They sought to create a livable world, with justice, mercy, and peace in the hellscape of the zombie outbreak. Sometimes they veered into gray areas of morality, but for the most part, I supported our heroes and their decisions to make a finer world. But unlike previous threats like Negan, the Governor, or the Whisperers, the Commonwealth represents an empire. This will be the greatest threat to our band of heroes, and I'm not only worried about who will survive, but of those who do- who will be completely changed? Who will agree that conformity and safety is better than freedom and risk? Who will accept the minor injustices for "the greater good?"

Some of your questions are on point, but I disagree with your premise that the Commonwealth is an empire. You may not agree with its policies, but its representatives seem far more reasonable than Negan, the Governor or the Whisperers... so far. It seems like most of the readers have been so goddamn traumatized over the years by this comic that they just want to go scorched-fucking-earth on any new community.

Walking Dead has never been better. Keep up the great work.

Brian Potter
Fort Worth, TX

P.S.: Oh man I am so hyped for Negan to learn about the Commonwealth!!

Oh man, what's THAT going to be like?! That is... if we ever see Negan again.

Heh.

G'evening, vivifiers of the dead:

I own thousands of comics and graphic novels,

have seen many more, and so of course have admired some very incredible art in and on them... as we all have.

But I can't think of anything I've seen before that evokes a comic book character as powerfully as Bill Sienkiewicz's cover art of Andrea does on TWD 178. It is... stirring. The sight of it makes me grieve anew that this fictional woman -- who was easily one of your very best creations -- "is dead."

I've looked at this image I have no idea how many times since Wednesday, and it grabs my rapt attention every single time. It's stunning, and moving, and so I write to praise the master artist who rendered it. My compliments go to you gentlemen, too, for creating the character who we so cared about who underlies it.

For more appreciation of Sienkiewicz art, btw, I particularly recommend to anyone his magnificent work in a Classics Illustrated "Moby Dick," from sometime in the 1990s.

Andrea.....

Phil Smith
Richmond, Virginia

That is in contention for my favorite TWD variant cover. It's just undeniable. Had no clue he did *Moby Dick*! Will check that out.

*It's my favorite of the run as well.
Glorious.*

Dear Captain Kirkman,

I'd like to thank you for a few things. Your books are awesome! The show is amazing! Your sense of humor is fantastic! Your characters are (another word for exceedingly good)! And you don't make everyone from the south sound like inbred hicks! One thing that is bittersweet is the fact that the first comic I ever read, recommended randomly by a family member, was issue #1 of The Walking Dead. As awesome as that is it also means that my first comic experience will, more than likely, never be surpassed. It's like I started doing heroin before I even drank a beer.

Right...

I had planned on writing in several issues ago about something, but it has been "corrected" in the last couple issues and I wanted to thank you for it. I myself don't swear. I don't mind hearing or reading it, it's no big deal. I realize that's definitely in the minority nowadays but it still made me think: as far back as I can remember in TWD comics, probably from issue one, Everyone has had a pretty foul mouth... with Negan being the only exception.... Again, it isn't something that actually bothers me and I couldn't imagine the language people would be using in the situations you put these people through. But it makes me happier than a sunflower on a baseball bat's grave to see a character that hasn't dropped the F bomb since her introduction eight issues ago. Not only that, but she's funny and killer in a fight!!

Thank you for Princess!!

Your future drinking buddy,
Tim O.
N.C.

So fucking thrilled you like Princess, Tim. I hear you on the cursing, but I'll be goddamned if profanity doesn't bother me one fucking shit sucking bit. Damn.

Greetings Letter Hacks crew!

I just finished reading issue #178 and am anxiously waiting for this arc to explode and reveal the true problem with the Commonwealth. I found it interesting that in #177 how Mercer sounded as if he's about to take over only to bottle it back up at the beginning of #178. I think Mercer will prove to be a seriously interesting character in the long run! I also can sense the tension that arose from Michonne when Elodie gets slapped and tells her 'like it is' regarding their treatment in the Commonwealth. Do I sense some Katana swinging in the future!? Also, will we get to see more of the Princess and her fighting skills? I got nervous for her when she went after the soldiers the way she did... I mean, they were all carrying assault rifles so it takes guts to go on the offense when all you have is a battle staff. Anyway I am super excited to see what direction the new world goes in when the communities collide. Thank you for making the Walking Dead stay as amazing as it's always been!

Ryan

PS - Any clue as to when or if Negan will rejoin a group? Will he be the savior that Rick and crew will need against the impending conflict with the Commonwealth and will that finally earn him his way back in?

We send Negan off into the sunset... and everyone just wants him back. It's only been 6 issues! (And just 4 since you wrote this letter!) IF Negan was to be called back in from the cold, I'd imagine it would have to be some pretty big circumstances.

We'll just have to see, won't we?

How does Pamela react to Rick's call for a new world order? Find out next issue-- it's THAT easy!

It's gonna be great! See you then!

-Robert Kirkman

Turn the page for a preview of Skybound's newest series, OUTPOST ZERO. Fans of the apocalypse will love this story by Sean McKeever and art by Alexandre Tefenkgi about a group of young people growing up at the edge of the universe.

-Sean Mackiewicz

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

What are your feelings about the new Governor now? Is it complicated? Then let's talk about something that isn't complicated, that's actually rather simple: WALKING DEAD DAY.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Saturday, October 13th. Mark it on your calendar. This is the first time we're doing this, and we want all of you to take part at your local comic book shop and other participating retailers. We've already started announcing some cool new TWD items that we'll be making available, with more details to come. Stay tuned to Skybound's social feed for more news as it becomes available.

That's right, Sean! It's gonna be a great time had by all! We've got all kinds of awesome things planned for it that we'll be rolling out over the next few months leading up to the day. So get very, very excited!

Now, let's answer some mail.

Kirman et al,

New World Order is coming to a close and my questions about the Commonwealth go unanswered. We have almost no REAL info on these guys. They have a bunch of people and a class system but how did they start, why do people obey them, how did the Miltons gain power, WHAT DO THEY WANT? Michonne is blinded by reunion to ask the hard questions, I can't wait for Rick Skeptical Grimes to sit down with Milton. "What a shit-hole" you're a shit-head Pamela. Eugene drop that katana! I love you but you are unworthy! I'm so uneasy about Michonne, she's alone and swordless, I'm certain she's just as deadly but I don't like it. Why does the Commonwealth need lawyers? What new laws have they undoubtedly erected — must have sex with Sebastian when asked? I hate that twerp. He reminds me of Spenser. Hmm, Sebastian, Spencer, Sherry, Shane.. sssuspicious. Although I can't figure out what Magna's deal with Princess is, I agree she'd make a rocking addition to the Hilltop spears and all. Alright Kirkman here's my wishlist (make it happen): 1. Lydia and Sophia cat fight over Carl. 2. Negan sees a hoard of walkers and comes back to warn Alexandria... Negan needs fertilizer for his sunflower and comes back... Negan needs more pork and beans... Negan comes back. I miss reading this guy he can't be gone forever!

Send me cans of pork and beans and I'll make sure Negan comes back. Can't have enough pork and beans! I grew up a B&M guy, but now it's mostly Bush's... but I can be swayed.

3. Mercer and Michonne.

Mercer and PRINCESS is the new shit.

4. Nathan Cole makes a miscalculation and transports into The Walking Dead dimension.

5. You print my letter and we become best friends.

I already have a best friend, but I'll still print your letter.

Undeadly yours,
Grace Staley

Aw, Sean... you've gone soft.

All them beans, man. High fiber.

Dear Kirkman and Crew,

Thank you for all that you do. Thank you especially for making Negan. He has been my favorite character since he hit the page. He is hilarious, badass, and underneath, I believe he is a decent person. In a lot of ways, I believe he is a better person than Rick. Anyway, I wanted to write in to let y'all know that my wife and I named our son Negan. He was just born on April 24th at 7lbs 15oz. He is perfectly healthy and strong. I think Negan is a powerful and unique name. Thanks for the inspiration! I can't believe my wife agreed to it! (Who wouldn't though, really?) If only people would realize I named him after this comic and NOT the TV show...

This is the first little baby Negan, as far as I'm aware. Congrats on having an awesome wife, congrats on your new son... maybe keep him away from the Louisville Slugger for as long as possible.

This is the best day of my life. I don't think I've EVER heard of anyone naming their baby Negan! That's awesome... and questionable parenting right out the gate! I approve!

I hope to see Negan again soon in future issues. Would love to see him put Sebastian in his place! I love this new story arc, and I am excited to see where it takes this amazing world that you've created. Keep doing what you're doing! I've loved every bit of it.

Justin from Michigan

PS - Would love to see the state of Michigan get some love in the comic.

This is as close as you get.

For now, at least...

Dear Robert & Crew,

I just finished issue #179 and I keep waiting for the other shoe to drop. I mean, can we finally get to the real bad hiding behind and underneath the Commonwealth? We all know it's too good to be true, after all. Bring it on, I say!

Sidenote #1 - I have to ask how you came up with the name The Commonwealth...is it because you're from Kentucky?

Not intentionally, but I KNOW the word "commonwealth" because I'm from Kentucky. I mean, I live in the world and all... but that's how I learned of it. So I didn't purposefully use Kentucky as inspiration... but you can't fight what's rattling around in the ol' noggin, y'know?

At the end of the issue, seeing Eugene hint at his plan to surprise Governor Milton was a nice twist...but does he really feel they have the strength to take on that many armed guards in the caravan? I know that Rick is a 'shoot first, ask questions later' kind of guy but this new Eugene seems more of a risk-taker than he ever was before.

His intention was to arrive ahead of the Governor so he could brief Rick privately... but

you're right, he's more confident than before... and rightfully so.

Sidenote #2 - Why didn't you choose to call Governor Milton something like 'Governess' Milton or 'Mayor' Milton so there is no comparison to the one true Governor (Mr. Blake)? Clearly they have different personalities but I happen to be partial to the OG governor who first appeared in issue #27.

"Mayor" just seemed like a silly play on The Governor. OH, we've seen THE GOVERNOR... now you're giving us The Mayor? Seemed lame. By having her be The Governor... there's a cool weight to it that I've been able to play with in the story.

Also, will Magna ever be given her due? When she appeared in issue #127 there was such fanfare over her arrival that I felt she'd be a much bigger part in TWD mythos than she has been thus far. Is there something more in store for her in the near future? I enjoyed seeing her stand up to the 'know your place' mentality that surrounds the members of the Commonwealth.

We'll be seeing more of her. I do regret not finding more room for her as the story went on.

Lastly, I'm a huge Michonne fan but she's getting soft on us...will there be a need for her to wield her Katana once more? This one can only hope!

She may wish she still had it in issues to come.

Thank you for continuing to make me excited to go to my LCS every first week of the month. Can we get some more bi-monthly issues soon? (Crosses fingers)

We're monthly for the foreseeable future. Need to preserve Charlie's sanity somehow.

Sincerely,
Ryan Nicholas Ray
Lexington, Ky

Unfortunately, I don't see us advancing the schedule any time soon. We are comfortably far ahead of schedule at this point, which is nice. I just turned in the script for issue #185!

Will Lydia ever find out who killed her mother?

Ivan

I love when readers ask questions like these.

Maybe. I know it's frustrating, but that's the kind of thing that is such a story trope... you just kind of FEEL like it has to happen... and when it does, it'll be a big scene. But in real life... you don't get satisfying scenes like that. Maybe it's boring, but I think it makes the story more real if we don't do things like that. If there's ever a REASON for Lydia to know Negan did that... she'll find out.

Dear Kirkman,

After reading the letter hacks of the previous issues (179 and before) and seeing more and more people chime in on Carl and his "girl troubles" I just thought I'd add my voice to the mix. I'm polyamorous myself so I'd love to see him try make it work with both of them if they were okay with it even if it ended up failing horribly in the end. It just really bothers me (and just about the entire poly community) every time I(we) see these situations in our favourite books, TV shows movies etc. of having to choose when there is clearly feelings that could grow into more when multiple parties are involved. You don't HAVE to choose. Maybe it works out maybe it doesn't but isn't that what all relationships are about.

As much as different people get represented in media recently the poly community mostly got left behind. In my head cannon if the Sophia and Lydia thing ever comes back up they try to give it a shot and see where it

goes even if it crashes and burns horribly because poly relationships are like any other in that they sometimes work out beautifully but they also fail or fail horribly a lot.

Whatever happens, I just had to throw my voice in there to give you an idea to consider because I know most of us write about what we know. Love to all the team working on this great piece of entertainment. Also love to the team on Oblivion Song because I'm too lazy to write anymore right now.

Sincerely,
A Random Poly Guy
A small island in the Caribbean

I'm with you, Rando, but these are pretty advanced relationship goals for teenagers. For three teenagers to navigate that emotionally? I think most of us adopt the relationship models that our families set, and it takes a lot to break from that thinking, too.

You're with him, Sean? We're learning so much about you! I think it would be fun to explore a polyamorous relationship in TWD, and we hinted at it with Carol a bit... but while it's a very real thing, it always felt like a gratuitous way to get three-ways into the story in some kind of exploitive way. I'm not a moron, I know your intriguing poly ways aren't just about three-ways, so maybe I just wasn't approaching the subject with enough maturity... the point being, I don't think that lifestyle is right for Carl... at least right now.

Wow...coming up on Issue #180 and to part 6 of 6 of the New World Order arc. Given Rick's history with governors, forgive me if I'm particularly concerned about how this meeting may go (especially with certain events that have recently transpired). The Commonwealth sure does seem like a faux paradise, other than that little snot Sebastian and the clearly imbalanced class system. But seeing some remnants of the good old days must've been great for everyone, particularly the football game. Heck, that made me think of Tyreese.

While this is all going on, I can't help but wonder what will happen to the Four Communities in the wake of Sherry's death. The Savivors are clearly a threat once again. Sherry filling the power vacuum after Negan didn't give the softer touch that I think most people were hoping. Dwight also seemed to hope that maybe things would get better, and even though they never did, Sherry's death rattled him. Another conflict with the Savivors seems imminent, and not just because of the Dwight/Sherry angle...I can't be the only one who noticed that Sherry and Tara had the makings of something quite intimate in Issue 161.

We'll check in with the Savivors again very soon, see if we can confirm or reject your speculation then.

Shhhh.

They're on an upcoming cover! I can't keep that secret!

Civil strife appears to be a festering tumor in The Commonwealth. The Savivors are once again a wild card. The Commonwealth's intentions toward Alexandria don't seem to be as friendly as they would have Eugene and the others believe...which thankfully Eugene and Magna seem to already be aware of. The Whisperers are down but, I don't think they're out. With such a "Larger World" (ha! See what I did there?) now facing all of the communities, and the rogue elements among each of them, I can't help but think we may be approaching a sort of "World War Z" situation, especially with the Commonwealth's political system and social imbalance. This is very exciting time for the book.

Slightly off-topic, I do feel like I must apologize - I know you want us to absolutely adore Princess...I really do get it. But I think of all the characters ever introduced into The Walking Dead, I just absolutely cannot find any

redeeming qualities about her. It pains me because it seems that introducing this character was one of the pivotal career moments for you in the history of this book. I don't think I've ever seen you guys so utterly excited to talk about a character in Letter Hacks. She's been a very polarizing character in the fan base, and I fall pretty steeply into the negative side of it. I suppose in time I will get used to her, as I suspect she's here to stay for the long haul.

"Pivotal career moments"? I dig Princess, though I'm pretty sure Negan has dominated our hearts and minds since #100. We love that guy almost enough to name our next child after him.

PRINCESS IS THE BEST!

That out of the way, i definitely appreciate how this time jump has evolved the book. I'd love to see what may happen in the coming issues, especially if The Whisperers were to reorganize and turn their horde onto the Commonwealth (though I imagine directing all those walkers there would take months and months). We know that Alpha and Beta are both dead, and the others seemed to have turned tail and fled, but I can't shake the feeling that things are not over with The Whisperers. Oh, and don't think we didn't catch that subtle hint of The Whisperers in the Season 8 finale either...

If Jesus and Aaron can be believed... and what more trustworthy bros are there? ...Whisperers are no mas.

Speaking of governors and Tyreese, it's amazing to think that The Governor and the Woodbury War was over a decade ago. I never forgot that fateful Issue #48. It was the very first time I wrote to Letter Hacks. This marks the second time (hope you feature me!). Seeing as how we're coming up on 200 issues in a little over one more year, I do want to say thank you. The Walking Dead has been a constant in my life since I picked up the first issue in 2004. Seeing how far the series has come, as well as how far I've come in my own life, is surreal. Thanks for being a part of that journey all these years from college to career to marriage to fatherhood. The Walking Dead is something I constantly look forward to every month, and will continue to do so until the end.

Michael P.
Long Island, NY

Thanks for writing. Pretty amazing that TWD is reaching its 15th Anniversary this year, and a lot of you have been reading this entire time.

Nothing quite like feeling OLD.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Hello all. I just wanted to put my two cents in and say that while I'm not really concerned about the human/walker population ratio, or what color the next person I see is much less the kind of cake someone bakes and hands out at a bakery, I believe a more important aspect that has sorely been under imposed is a vegan representation. Since this has mainly turned into a story about survival, why aren't more people trying to choose healthy eating practices? Where are the gardens? The botanists? Horticulturalist?

Ha! Totally joking about that.

Who cares! Bring on more death, sex, and doom and gloom. Great comic as always. That's really all that matters to me anyway. Something I can read while I'M baked, listening to some Hindu music, and munching on whatever the hell kind of cake I want at the time.

T
This guy gets it.

For sure...

Robert,

The Walking Dead continues to impress, lately. Princess really add something: Finally someone with some real personality! What's the name of Magna's lady friend? I haven't quite caught that yet. Yet another issue without any Roamers in it, huh? Say, where did the New World Order get their Rifles and armor? Or did they make them themselves? Don't know if we've covered that yet. How come Carl's eye doesn't get infected or whatever? And has he ever worn an eyepatch in the comic? By now you must be planning TWD issue #200, huh? Might I suggest another major death or two?

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

PS: For instance, maybe even put Rick Grimes in a coma!! It'd be a total World Without Superman(i.e. Rick Grimes) scenario! He could have some wild dreams (again) and the world without him would be a good experiment, too. Hey: Is Rick short for Richard, or what? What bout Maggie, i.e. Margaret? What's Princess' real name?! You may've used it once, but not even I have total recall.

You have zero recall. It's almost charming. But hey, you really redeem yourself with that Princess love. Write any time.

Andrew J. Shaw loves Princess! Woo hoo!

You fuckers

Now I'm really worried about Michonne! She gives up her sword. No way would I give up my fucking sword in this world! Too trusting too quick. I know she found her daughter but these commonwealth pricks! Come on! She's buying this? And you then Sean starts the letter hacks with "it's really cool to see Michonne find some peace blah happy blah Ezekiel... Eugene... Samurai sword...action figure!!!

You Fuckers better not kill her in issue 200. I'm telling you we still haven't forgotten Glen. Enough is enough, you better not do this. Kill Rick! He's fucked now anyway!

Love you whatever (unconditional)
Splattmandu x

I love that people are trying to predict who lives and dies by our comments. But... you may be on to something. All I can say is that at least one character mentioned in this Letter Hacks dies before #200.

No one dies in issue #200. There, I said it. Canon-- letters columns count!

Governor Milton continues to tour the communities, and not everyone's happy to see her. Find out who in August.

Also, in a couple short weeks, we'll be in San Diego for Comic-Con. Check out our panels, signings and booth if you're there... or our streaming programming online. Those five days are packed with announcements and news... and, man, will we have plenty to get you talking about.

Also, if you're not reading REDNECK, we've included a preview of the third arc, starting July 25th! Donny Cates and Lisandro Estherren have created a book that is as shocking and deeply enjoyable as this here comic. The first two trades are available now, and the third arc is an absolute MONSTER.

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you then!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Friendly Savors! The Hilltop rebuilt! Things are looking up around these parts. Like the Governor, I too, hope the days of children getting shot in the eye are behind everyone. Positivity and privilege: the two defining pillars of the Commonwealth. Let's hope it's everything as promised when Rick arrives.

Now let's see which of your letters are "Commonwealth material"!

We've got Comic-Con in a few days so... let's just dive right in.

Point of interest: the Commonwealth would not be as big as it is or lasted as long if they weren't doing something right. You may have fooled everyone else, Mr. Kirkman, but I see you for the capitalist you really are.

Jason
Rochester, NY

We sell WALKING DEAD wine—of course we're capitalists! But is the Commonwealth capitalist? We haven't really seen how their economy functions.

Stay tuned!

Dear Kirkman & Crew,

I just finished reading the end to the New World Order story arc from issue #180 and I cannot wait to see what comes next between Alexandria and the Commonwealth. The 'sword-measuring' between Governor Milton & Rick was fun at times but also tense...especially in the last panel after Rick puts her in her place by suggesting that it's time for a new world order. Well, I agree...it IS time for a New World Order...and maybe Rick will be the one to establish it. So if Rick out governed Governor Milton, would that make him President Rick? You have to admit, it does have a nice ring to it. Or maybe since this is a medieval-ish society we're establishing it could be King Rick, or Rick-the-Great, or Rick...first of his name...hook for a hand...father of Carl. There's just no limits to the titles RG could take away from this.

If Rick was going to bestow himself with a title, wouldn't he have done it already? What if "Rick" becomes the new term for President? Like, "Who wants to be the Rick when they grow up?" "Who voted for that Rick?" "The Rick's a real asshat."

For the record, being *that* Rick would be

a thankless job.

Moving on, I'm really excited to see what Mercer can do. I hope we can get some more background info on him in the near future as he is a really interesting character. Sebastian, however, is a character I can't foresee making it long in this society without having Mercer backing him at his every turn...and we all know how Mercer feels about him after that awkward scene with Siddiq. I am looking forward to that confrontation to take fruit.

Lastly, I want to know what is up with Negan. I know, I know...it's only been around 8 or so issues since he's appeared buuuuuut he's one of the best characters in the story just roaming around surviving on his own right now...just eating squirrels and berries and whatnot. Can we get him back into the fold in some capacity, good or bad, in the very near future perchance?

No. But if you're missing some Negan in your life... have you considered buying THE QUOTABLE NEGAN? Haven't you wanted all of Negan's choice quotes in one place, for when you need some direction in life—or just have time to kill on the crapper? It's a fun little book we put together through our new Skybound Books imprint, and it's IN STORES NOW. It's also got an intro from Robert that reveals the TWO times Negan should've died.

His last conflict with Maggie made us feel sincere empathy for him and we gained a better understanding of the choices he felt he had to make to survive in the post-apocalyptic world but will that encounter resonate enough for him to make a true character shift? This guy (me) wants to know! Is it possible, too, that he will pick up another bat to wield? Having him without Lucille (or a bat in general) is like having Michonne without her Katana. We all assume she's getting it back at some point... so can Negan get his back, too, maybe?

If we see Negan again—and we won't—I'd be really surprised if he had a bat with him. It feels like he put that behind him in his last appearance.

It certainly SEEMED that way...

Thank you for making new comic Wednesday on the first week of the month (and sometimes twice a month when TWD is bi-monthly) a day to really look forward to. I'm a faithful fan till the end and I hope the end is really really far away...like at issue 1,000 or something even higher.

Sincerely or 'graggh!' as a walker might say,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

*Lexington, represent! Issue #1000 seems
a long ways off... but who knows... we
might just get there!*

Was Mercer named after the Mercer character
from the animated film "G.I. Joe: The Movie"?

Just curious.
Rob Shelor
Roanoke VA
YO JOE!

*Not explicitly... but that's definitely the
first time I encountered that name... and I
do love that movie and all things G.I. Joe.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the conclusion of the latest issue and
Rick's support of a new world order, I would
like to congratulate you on making Rick Grimes
the most popular communist since Jesus Christ.
Tell me if you will - do you intend to bring the
communism discussion into the storyline or will
it remain unnamed?

Best,
Rob
Alexandria, VA (The Real One)

**We got a couple communism letters
this month and... he's kind of more of a
socialist. That's my read.**

That's my read as well.

Robert, Charlie and company,

I sure love me some Princess; there, I got on
that bandwagon.

**You've already been on the record as being
on the bandwagon, and guess what? You're
driving it now!**

The cover to issue #180 had Alpha on the
cover? I thought Alpha, and Beta from the
Whisperer War were like old news? Must've
been one of those Lying Covers (a Skybound
specialty), huh? Funny that this whole "Let's
meet the Commonwealth" thing is called New
World Order; especially since this series is in
Black and White? Cause yeah, you still see nWo
t-shirts from the 90's occasionally.

**This was a rough paragraph. I didn't laugh
once. Chicken fried rice!**

More and more people keep popping up out of
the woodwork in TWD! Tell me, are we running
out of Zombies, or whatever they're called, yet?
As far as I know, the Walkers--that's the TWD
gang--have never been to another continent on
Earth since, you know, the...zombie apocalypse.
What if everyone else is doing just fine: Ever
consider that? I mean, how would Rick and
company know what was going on in China or

Nicaragua--they haven't been there!

**See THE WALKING DEAD: THE ALIEN for
why you are wrong (available at www.panelsyndicate.com).**

And for some reason all the cell/ smart phones
have disappeared, long since; perhaps this
apocalypse took place in the 1980's, before cell
phones were popular?

**Cell phone towers wouldn't work, so...
why have cell phones? We all know the
only phones that work in TWD have too
many buttons that Rick talks to in his
head.**

Whatever happened to the Whisperers,
anyway? Or Negan for that matter! They didn't
all die, I'm sure of that; are they still out there
Plotting something?...Ever think about an
Endgame for The Walking Dead? What I mean
is, Mignola (Mike) says he's been working on
an end run for BPRD/ Hellboy stuff for "a while
now"; I want to know your thoughts on the
hypothetical end of TWD! Or will it indeed go
until the end of time? Realistically, what could
really Cause a "worldwide" zombie apocalypse
overnight, anyway? I want answers, darn it!

I love BPRD/Hellboy. Read those.

*Do you WANT the series to end, Shaw?
C'mon! In a way, I've been working toward
an ending since the very first issue... this
is just a VERY long story.*

I should add, and will, that "Walking" is still one
of my faves; you guys are still into it, and so, so
are we. Say, are there any Working helicopters
still around? Or did they disappear with the
cell phones? Were they turned into zombie-
copters from Hell? Who knows. Come to think
of it, TWD the series' zombie apocalypse goes
back Before smart phones, And social media.
I wonder if you ever covered things like that:
Where are the helicopters, cell phones, etc,
the Technology in other words, from before...
you know? I know we still have cars and guns,
like Mad Max or some kind of future like that,
so that's something. But the more I think about
it, the less Realistic this book gets--even just in
the course of writing this letter/ e-mail! Planes!
What happened to all the Aircraft from Before?
Did they all just drop out of the sky, or what?
Must be some on the ground somewhere; and
of course we still have boats, right?--the cast at
large could Sail to China! Or somewhere. Good
reading.

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

**How could we end the series any time
soon with this many unresolved issues?
Let's start publishing more than one
issue a month to get a jump on them.**

*That paragraph started on a very positive
note. Thank you so much, Shaw.*

Hey there, fellas!

Just read Issue 180. Even after 180 issues, 30

volumes, 15 books, 7.5 omnibuses, and 3.75 compendiums, etc... I still get amazed reading this series! You wouldn't believe the struggle I had waiting for this issue to release after 179 and now I have to wait until JULY for 181... UGH.

Moving on, I just want to say that I'm super stoked for what's to come. I've never been so into a comic book before (other than INVINCIBLE and my recent rereading of the ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN series after I first read a bit of it 8 or so years ago as a small child) and I'm glad this series is what I'm hooked on. Without y'all, I wouldn't be where I am today. I have a potential career path as a comic book artist thanks to the legendary artist that is Charlie Adlard, as well as an amazing girlfriend that I met thanks to our mutual interest of the phenomenon you created... thank you, Robert. It means my life that you created The Walking Dead. Truly!

I'd also like to add that the interaction between Rick and Princess was really wholesome! Her quirky and hyper and colourful personality really gives the story so life, even if the chances of someone like her surviving this long isn't all too thick.

She's survived longer than all your beloved dead characters. Hopefully last issue demonstrated just why that is.

Rick's mentioning of the Governor (Philip/Brian, not Pamela) was REALLY chilling too. He hasn't been mentioned in ages, and I start getting flashbacks to the prison days when he does get brought up.

Finally, one of the letters by Tim O. regarding the language and swearing in the book brought me back to when I went through the many, many issues many, many months ago (probably even a year!) when I looked for the last issue to NOT include the F-bomb; Issue 96! That's nearly 100 issues ago and you've integrated that word at least ONCE in every issue since then. Even issues like this one! And Negan wasn't even present! Honestly, this issue didn't even need it but nooo, you just had to have Laura say "fucking" on page 5... motherfucking goddamn fuck.

That's a fun fucking fact.

That's really... odd. I'm not TRYING to use it every issue... I wonder if that holds up in the recent issues... I'll try to pay attention.

Anyways, I'm out for the month! Wake me up when it's July 4th! Speaking of which, I'll actually be on a flight that day to Australia! Hopefully 181 is QUADRUPLE sized to keep me busy for the duration of my trip!

Love you guys!

Andy Gasal
OG+ Walker Member
Vermont, USA

I hope you enjoyed your flight.

Hey Kirkman and Team

I am wondering with the telltale game coming to an end if you are planning or have thought about moving any of the characters over. Or just make a side series. If you haven't that's cool you can just use one timeline like for example keep Kenny alive. or even put clem or Javier you could also put a small time character in. so if you are thinking of this or might do it could you please reply

Thanks love the reading the comics
Alec

I'm only replying to say the first episode of the FINAL Telltale season will be available to download August 14th. Whether you've followed Clem's journey through every season or looking to make up for lost time since Season 1, you'll find a lot to enjoy. There's a new game engine featuring more dynamic gameplay and some interesting bits that fans of the comic will appreciate. Whether anyone from the game shows up in the comic... let's see who survives first.

Hey Walking Dead Team!

This issue was a blast! I was more excited for Rick and Pamela to meet than I was when Rick first met Gregory or Ezekiel!

Also, I absolutely loved how you threw in the awkwardness of Pamela's title and having Rick tell her about his history with The Governor, that was great!

So, now we know Pamela stepped up to the plate after the original leaders (died? Got taken out?) disappeared. What does that mean exactly? And how did she end up where she is now? I don't think we ever got to hear what she did before the world ended.

Was she actually a governor before? She would've had to be a politician at least to be where she is, right? I'm curious, too!

Stay tuned!

I loved how Rick freaked out when he saw Michonne's sword, that was fantastic!

Can't wait for next issue, see you then!

Andi Tiscareño
El Paso, Texas

Next month we catch up with Michonne, who no longer has a sword. I'm glad she doesn't need one anymore. See ya then!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Man... that's a little foreboding, Sean. This is going to be an intense month-long wait. Now... ON TO COMIC-CON! Hopefully I saw you there!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

As a popular anchorman once said, "Boy, that escalated quickly." Rick has arrived at the Commonwealth in the midst of chaos... where do we go from here?

All kinds of interesting places. Just you wait!

In other news, holy crap, it's a crazy time for WALKING DEAD fans right now. Gearing up for Season 9 and Angela Kang's tenure as showrunner... while the back half of Season 4 of Fear The Walking Dead airs... and Telltale's final season—and swan song for Clementine—has launched... and we've got Overkill's The Walking Dead just around the corner... whew! There's just so much going on! And here we are in the story that started it all... and the Commonwealth is literally on fire! I'm very excited about what's coming, people. There's a ton of really great stuff on the horizon... including WALKING DEAD DAY in October... but more on that at the end of the column... after some awesome letters. Speaking of which...

Hello, you know that your comments only scare me more. I am just worried sick about Michonne right now. She is my favourite and I really hope she keeps surviving, she has just found her daughter and for me she is a badass.

Regards,
María José

I'm sorry...

No comment.

Issue #181 was delightful! I just finished it, and I found it wonderful as always. No, more wonderful than now-almost-always! If Mercer and Princess get married, I hope he changes his name to Prince. I know, yeah, obviously The Commonwealth has probably legislated their idea of which party should change their name in a marriage, but one hopes that the new lawyer will help bring in new laws. [Numbered questions stealthily creep in...] 1. Say, have we had any marriages performed in the comic?

Glenn and Maggie! Been a while... got a crazy wedding coming in another Skybound comic this fall though...

2. DO marriages get performed in Alexandria? I know that Alexandria doesn't have a judiciary as such, but 3. they have a church still, right? 4. Or was that a previous residence for Rick and his pals? 5. If Alexandria doesn't have a church, does God exist? 6. Should I have maybe left my questions un-numbered? I'm thinking maybe #4 was kind of pushing it because you probably shouldn't have to fact-check my memory. 7. Are my regrets well-earned?

As Jay-Z says, "In order to survive, gotta learn to live with regrets."

REAL-ER TALK NOW OKAY. I'm really kind of having a hard time accepting how The Commonwealth could come to be. I understand that a complete-end-of-civilization-as-we-know-it scenario could help make people choose, en masse, to embrace a suggested simulacrum of the world that was. Where I don't buy it is where the people willingly step into a scenario that can be described as, "The world the way it used to be, but Americans no longer have freedom of speech, nor even putative equal protection under the law." Yeah, I know that The Governienne probably didn't actually put those caveats on bumper stickers; I also know that in the real world (let's stipulate that ours is the real world) the U.S. of A. seems kind of super-willing to let that scenario blunder right into being... in my opinion. I just don't buy that in a lawless postapocalyptic world, people would simply allow that to happen before the former have-nots decide that the guillotine is the best way to go.

So you think it's easier to create a newer, better way of living than to fall back on old ways—in a civilization where everyone has severe PTSD?

Also... so... the Commonwealth is more farfetched than how the WHISPERERS decided to live?

Counter-point: Mr. Kirkman and TWD have earned my trust, plus also people are totally willing to trade freedom for safety, I guess. Huh. I dunno. I still think Negan and Maggie would've had a super great luv 4-evah, so I may not know everything like I used to think before I started this e-mail.

Sean, I'm with you all the way about Bush's Pork & Beans.

I'm named,
John Velousis,
in Chicago, IL

Shout out to Grace Staley who sent me a super cool care package that included cans of beans and a homemade gardener Negan figure. Maybe I'll get around to posting a pic on Instagram someday...

Mercer is dope.

Josh Kotsabasakis from New Brunswick, Canada

Yeah!

Completely agree!

Dear WALKING DEAD Crew,

First thank you I'm a newer reader started reading The Walking Dead summer of 2017 and I was hooked right away. As of today I am up to date (issue 181). I have 2 things to say.

1. I know a lot of people have been asking for Negan to be brought back..... But UNPOPULAR OPINION: I don't want him to be brought back I feel like he was a bad guy. Scratch that I KNOW he was a bad guy, and yes he is changing and stuff so if you do bring him back just do it temporarily so people can see an end to his story whether it's happy or sad.

Agreed, but only if it's a sad ending. Like a really sad one. Like more sad than what's going to happen to Mich—

Are we sure we haven't already SEEN the end of Negan's story?

2. The princess is pretty FRICKIN GREAT I mean at first I was a little iffy about her but now I love her she's just a great character in my opinion. She definitely Reminds me of a certain blue and pink pigtailed DC character, like her very colorful personality and style, her badassery, and her signature melee weapon.

BOO.

Agree with Sean. I do not see the comparison.

Thanks for listening,

Garrett
Princeton, TX

Thanks for writing, puddin'.

Kirkman,

I want to offer a snippy critique, but first, please understand, I love your work. I read TWD, Oblivion Song, Outcast, and I picked up the first issue of the new one with Burnham. I'm a big fan!

That said, the end of New World Order was hamfisted. After reading the arc and really digging the trajectory, it was jarring for Rick and "the Governor" to wrench their dialogue to the point of Rick using the phrase "new world order." C'mon, man! Nobody talks that way! For her to say her line about how a class system has always been the world order (which no one would ever say in that way!) was just a set up for Rick to drop the name of the arc. It felt like a cheap trick!

Agree to disagree? Honestly... I knew that line was coming and that's why I named the arc NEW WORLD ORDER. I was building to that line the whole time. It wasn't a case of me trying to shoehorn in the title of the storyline.

It like if ASM #1 ended with someone saying, "he certainly is an amazing spider man!"

She could have more believably said something like, "there have always been classes," or "people are happier knowing their place," or even "people need to know their role." But the way you forced the landing was jarring.

Ok, sorry. I had to get that off my chest. Sorry for never writing to tell you how much I enjoy and admire your creative genius, and only writing to share a quibble.

Love,
Ben
Asheville, NC

Thank you for writing. I do value all feedback

of all kinds... except overwhelmingly positive feedback... that stuff is USELESS! So really, thanks. Some people HATE that kind of punchy dialogue... I get what you're saying. But I do enjoy it. I mean... have you read the end of issue #24?

Kirkman and Crew,

Hey guys. Two of the only things I love more than The Walking Dead are economics and philosophy, so I've been beyond ecstatic with the themes that are beginning to blossom in this new arc. I hadn't realized it until this arc, but our communities are amazing examples of what free and voluntary societies would look like on both ends of the economic spectrum. Alexandria is a perfect anarchosocialist community that pretty much lives by the maxim of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need." The Hilltop is a lot like what an anarchocapitalist society would look like, where people have private property and people like Earl Sutton seem to trade what they make for something resembling profit (as much as you can have without currency). I really love how between Michonne, Rick, Pamela, and Magna, you've really done a great job of showing the arguments on both sides that isn't finger-pointing and reductive.

However, The Commonwealth upends this dichotomy with an authoritarian government that assigns people jobs and social status and is the first community we've seen that isn't pretty libertarian.

Am I onto something here? Is this arc shaping up to be a criticism of authoritarianism versus liberty, or an exploration of the right/left economic divide?

Either way, keep up the great work!

Andy B,
Pennsylvania

I'm just glad we finally get to talk economics in Letter Hacks. Game on!

Oooh, baby!

If you all have the feeling that this is leading somewhere awful, it is. But let's go there together in October—which is also when we're celebrating the first ever TWD Day in comic shops and book stores, with lots of exclusive comics debuting then. We'll also be at NYCC very soon with all of our favorite Skybound creators. All the details for both events can be found at Skybound.com.

Also, I'm pleased to share with you a preview of our new Skybound comic, MURDER FALCON. Last year, Daniel Warren Johnson created the Eisner-nominated EXTREMITY, and this year he's going to melt faces with the heavy metal, kung fu comic everyone's been waiting their entire lives to read. It hits stores October 10th. It's everything comics was made to be. Adios!

-Sean Mackiewicz

MURDER FALCON is the best! Enjoy that preview, folks! And we'll be back here next month for a whole bunch of chaos.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

You all have been thinking it's all peace and peachy over at the Commonwealth, but that carefully maintained image is really starting to crumble. Do you see the same opportunity that Dwight does? Or does he just need some great sex to cool him out and think clearly? Let's all pray for the best.

Also, it's October, meaning we're celebrating TWD Day at your local comic shop and participating book sellers. Head on over Saturday, October 13th, and check out some of the cool swag we made especially for the day, such as the 15th Anniversary polybagged issues. We've reprinted 15 key TWD issues and got some of our favorite artists (who've never done TWD covers) to do brand-new covers: David Finch, Sana Takeda, J. Scott Campbell, Emma Rios, Ashley Wood—that's only 5 and already a murderer's row of talent. Each cover has four different cover treatments, and some—I'm revealing this exclusively to YOU, dear reader—have a super rare, secret 5th variant, packed 1:100.

Also, Season 9 premieres THIS Sunday, October 7th (my personal favorite day of the year) right as we're wrapping up New York Comic-Con and bursting with undigested pizza slices.

Man, oh, man! So much cool stuff going on! Also, I launched a new series with Scott M. Gimple and Chris Burgham called DIE!DIE!DIE! It's in stores now and already up to issue #3 so give that a look if you haven't already.

Now let's just dive into some mail!

Dear Kirkman & Crew,

After reading issue #182 can I just say that I am so anxious to see something go down between the Commonwealth & Alexandria/the Hilltop/ the Kingdom/ Saviorville! So much buildup...it's like watching lottery numbers being drawn from that ping-pong ball thing all the while knowing you are holding a winning ticket! I know it seems like a conflict is impending from the underlying tension between Governor Milton & Rick (for whose societal ideals will win out in particular) but if something doesn't happen soon I'm curious as to where the next big threat will come from.

A lack of good sex—bet.

Is this some kind of in-joke I'm not hip to?

Do I have to have a sex talk with you? Oh, boy...

Also, can I say how much future potential I can see in John as a character? He definitely stood out in this issue and to me that's a really cool thing. I enjoyed his mantra of gathering (growing) over hunting (shooting) while talking to Christopher in the orchard. It's nice to at least let the characters feel that their society is shifting toward quality of survival instead of survival at all costs. But how long can that last?

That's a great question that is certainly at the center of some upcoming conflict.

Yeah! And we definitely don't want to spoil that here!

I did feel bad for Rick, though, after being reminded a few times throughout the issue of the loss of Andrea. It just seems like fate that if he doesn't end up going to war with Pam that he just may end up being at her

side (or her at his). Between his leg injury at the end of All Out War, the loss of his hand to the OG Governor, the deaths of Judith & Lori, the loss of Andrea, and having his best friend Shane's betrayal on multiple levels...well, how much more can a guy take? He deserves a companion if he's going to survive in this post-apocalyptic world...even if it's a labradoodle. Now that I think about it, will we ever have a full time pet companion in the Walking Dead universe? Cat? Turtles are pretty resilient...with their shells and such...how about a turtle for Rick?

And that turtle will almost certainly outlive everyone in this book and their children... unless folks get desperately hungry.

Thanks for continuing to make the best comic out there and I absolutely can't wait for the 15th anniversary issues to be released! Is it October yet??? TWD forever!

Sincerely,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

Is it officially October when this issue hits stores?! It is, isn't it? So yes, Ryan! It is October! Rejoice!

Walking Dead Gods,

I absolutely love this book. I'm sure I've said as much before, but lately you've had me realizing that it's because of a lot more reasons than the obvious. The human interaction is what I most love about this book, and I swear it keeps getting better as the series goes on. There are real life style confrontations between some of our most loved characters, and they don't always end up going the way we expect them to. The issue with Maggie and Negan was absolutely my favorite issue ever because of this, and it didn't even involve a death.

When Rick and Dwight made up (somewhat) on the way back from the Sanctuary, a lot of people were probably upset at the idea that their very tense confrontation at Alexandria didn't lead to a rebellion or anything life changing, but that's the kind of thing I love about The Walking Dead. I've been in fights with friends that didn't turn into a huge split, and their willingness to forgive each other is a great example of how realistic this book can be. Not everything needs to be a big plot twist, and you guys do a great job in showing that with the story progression.

Now, Rick obviously doesn't intend to be, but he seems to be seriously on the rebound when it comes to Governor Milton. That frame after Dwight and Laura met back up literally cast Rick in a shadow of loneliness. I know I can't be the only one who saw the sexual tension between Rick and the new gov in #182. They're touching each other's legs, they're flirting with each other here and there. I really love the idea of Rick having an attraction to someone who's ideals he doesn't agree with; it would make for a hell of a lot more depth in their story to come.

Wow—I've never even considered that. If we're going to pursue the idea that good sex leads to better quality of life... and who among you are going to argue with that rock-solid logic?... then a Governor/Rick hook-up could be a good thing. He convinced her to get out there with the rest of them and clean up the streets already, who knows what could happen if they made things official?

Well, all I can say is I’ve never read a book quite like this, and no matter what the future holds this comic will always be my number one!

Please make 8,000 more issues,

Mark Jackson
Deer Park, TX

We won’t even make 8,000 more PAGES riding this series to completion!!! Unless we all live as long as turtles.

Don’t challenge me! We could do it! Charlie can start drawing 66 pages a month... at that rate... we could hit 8,000 pages in around 10 years! What do you say, Charlie?!

Hey!

My dad died April 2nd this year. My sensibilities changed. With every dramatised hospital bed scene I think, “that’s not how it goes”. I’m more sensitive to jokes about “you only have X weeks to live”. Grief changes the way you process your normal every day.

I want to mention how well you captured the emotional beat of Carl’s worry about his dad in issue 182 and Rick’s moment to process that. The silence said so much. Grief, reflection. Allowing yourself to be distracted but then the crashing realisation that special person is no longer around.

I hovered over that panel for a long time.

Thanks Robert, and thank you Charlie for capturing a moment so perfectly.

Adam Sherring
Washington, England

Thank you, Adam. Not to get sappy or overly dramatic or anything, but it’s letters like these that really make things worthwhile. I’m very sorry for your loss.

Dear Walking Dead,

I’ve been very excited for season nine of the show after that pulse pounding comic-con trailer, so I’ve been rereading the excellent Whisperer story arcs. Now I have a question that I’m not sure has been asked yet. Was Rick planning to set up a trial for Negan? Perhaps he was, but the Whisperers got in the way of it. I’d just like to know if Rick wanted to someday have a jury decide if Negan should rot in a cell or be executed. Would Negan plead “guilty”, or “not guilty”?

Sincerely,
Isaiah McKeighen

My impression was Rick was going to leave Negan to rot down there until he found some compelling reason to put him to work improving the community. I don’t get the read on Rick that he’s much for leaving matters in the hands of a jury.

As I recall, that’s pretty accurate. I figure whatever discussion and consulting with others had been done during the time jump between #126 and #127, Rick had pretty much made up his mind that Negan would... DIE in that cell. Rick’s intention was that Negan would never leave... but Negan more or less outsmarted him on that front.

Hey Twd team!

I wanted to talk to you guys about Negan in Tekken 7. I mean seriously??? This is amazing! I legit just bought Tekken 7 on amazon because of Negan. Do you guys play Tekken? I can’t wait for him to come out! this is so great I love how you guys, AMC, and Bandai/Tekken managed to make this come true, I never would imagine this in a million years I mean now we can see Negan

beat up anime girls, how awesome is that? Oh and one more thing, have a great day guys!

Relish Crew

I mean, Tekken’s no Mortal Kombat... but it’s pretty cool. Even if King would school that motherfucker like nobody’s business.

I’ve spent countless hours at the arcade enraging people with my Eddy Gordo skills on Tekken 3. So, let me just confirm, YES... I love Tekken and I can’t wait to play as Negan.

Button masher.

Not so thrilled about the Commonwealth; their army outmatches Rick’s one. Rick and his gang can easily be overthrown. It’s too reminiscent of SPQR, because everyone joined the Roman Empire until they too, were destroyed. Please tell me Rick doesn’t die soon.

Kindest regards
Zed, Australia

In the comic or... elsewhere...? Let’s switch gears and say, yes, the army is larger than anything Rick can muster, but there’s more factors to account for than that. Unhappy Commonwealth civilians may just as easily outnumber their protectors.

Very true... stay tuned, people.

Hello Kirkman and Team

I would just like to say that the Final Season of the Walking Dead Game is off to a fantastic start! Although both shows and the comic are great, I have never been this excited about anything Walking Dead related. The characters are fresh and there are finally some decent suitors for Clementine, #TeamViolet. Sorry Gabe, you were not cutting it! And lastly, if Clementine dies we riot!

Matthew Friesen
Saskatchewan, Canada

Glad you’re enjoying it. I am Team Violet as well. The second episode just dropped last week. Episode 3 is planned for 11/6 and episode 4 for 12/18. We’ll probably be answering a lot of Clem questions after that one...

Heh.

Next month Rick and Dwight have a sit-down... and the pursuit of sex continues. I’m not kidding!

There wasn’t THAT much sex in this issue! Sheesh!

Also, check out this preview our new Skybound comic, OUTER DARKNESS. John Layman co-created Chew, one of the best comics of the past decade. Now he returns with artist Afu Chan to re-envision Star Trek as a horror comic. Creepy, darkly funny, it’s a complete blast... and lands in stores November 7th. Check it out!

-Sean Mackiewicz

OH MY GOD! I know this book isn’t sci-fi, but let me tell you... if you like TWD in any form... especially the comic (and since you’re holding it, I bet you do) OUTER DARKNESS is something you will definitely enjoy! So please, pre-order it at your local comic shop, or at the very least, give it a look when you see it on store shelves November 7th! It’s GREAT!

See you back here next month! I hope you have/had a good time at New York Comic-Con. Maybe I shook your hand! If not... you should have said hi when you saw me buying Transformer toys.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Dwight's playing a dangerous game here, but maybe... possibly... he's right to do so? Having Mercer's support could go a long way... but war, what is it good for? So, yeah, Rick's right, too. Who gets to be the tiebreaker?

October is always a special time for TWD, and I want to especially thank all of you who went out for TWD Day at your comic and book stores. This event is something we've talked about doing for years, and we hope you had a great time. We snuck some super rare, unannounced variants into select polybags—for the Campbell, Burnham, Craig, Harren and Rios covers—so maybe those are still sitting on your local shelves.

And then there's madness breaking out in Season 9 of the TV show! Crazy, crazy stuff there!

ALL THIS and letters?! What lucky fans you are! Let's dive right in so I can provide varying levels of evasiveness in my responses! Fun!

I'm begging you, please cancel or reboot the series after #200 is released.

Thank you kindly,
Kristoffer Infante

**The future of TWD is brighter than ever!
Great start this month!**

(I just really appreciate how no reasoning was given whatsoever.)

Cancel or REBOOT?! Why would you want a reboot? Start over?! Yeesh. I will NOT be taking your advice, Kristoffer. SHEESH!

Dear Kirkman & Crew,

I know Michonne already does...but can I just say that I love Greenville, too? I do have one question about it, though...when Michonne, Elodie, & Jerome make it to Greenville and bask in the glory of it's greatness, did they pass through a gate of some kind before entering I'm hoping? I ask because the stone streets looked as open and inviting as they were on the way there after the Walker attack that Jerome almost got offed in. Surely those Greenville residents have an entrance safeguarding their little slice of heaven, right?

It's so well maintained, it doesn't even need one. Just a beautiful hand painted sign posted along the side of the road welcoming you, with no stray blood spatter or pieces of brain to mar it. *sigh* Greenville...

It hasn't been stated specifically, but the communities in the Commonwealth don't need gates or walls because they have such a large security force that is always patrolling the area around the settlements and keeping them safe. It's a well-oiled machine! What could go wrong?!

Also...seeing Michonne 'BRAKKA, BRAKKA, BRAKKA,' was ultra cool...but can we maybe have someone in Alexandria overnight ship her katana back to her so she can get back to swinging her sword again? Surely she can put it to better use than Eugene or Rick can. Can we have a reunion for the two of them? I mean, Negan lost Lucille... but does Michonne have to go sans-sword for much longer? I hope not, at least.

NEVER. If she picks up that sword again, she loses all credibility. Fool me once, twice... but three times?

Also, swords are strictly prohibited from the courtroom.

Also, the whole point of this story is that these characters evolve and change over time. This isn't a superhero series. We don't need to have Michonne running around cutting zombies up with her sword for thirty years. That would get repetitive and boring. I'm not saying she'll definitely NEVER hold that sword again... but don't expect her to return to the old status quo completely... ever.

Poor Anthony Keith...alas, we knew him well... at least from the couple of panels where he's getting pummeled, anyway. Is the Commonwealth finally showing the danger that lies deep beneath the surface? Rick sure did look surprised to see what was going down all over!

Last thing - the artwork was ultra fantastic this go-round...it makes me sad that I only had one issue to read this month. Can we go back to bi-weekly yet? I'm more than ready for the doubling up of TWD issues per month!

**No no NO NO no no No nO nO NO
NOOOOOOOOOOOOO!**

Seconded.

Thanks for another incredible issue...can't wait for more! I also can't wait for The Walking Dead Day...so hurry up, October!!!

Sincerely,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

I hope you enjoyed it!

Are walkers eatable?

In the world of The Walking Dead, dogs are immune to the infection. However, it's not the infection that kills you: if you get bitten by a rotting corpse, OR, at least in our world, IF YOU BITE ONE, it's very likely for you to die or, at least, get very, very sick, whether you are a human or a dog.

You have already said in your reply to my last Telltale-related question that you review their games' scripts and all, so they gotta stick to your rules since the games are kind of set in the same world. In the games, dogs bite walkers. A lot. And they (the dogs, not the walkers) stay alive and somehow healthy.

Dogs also eat garbage and their own vomit and clean their own butts with their tongues. Dogs aren't humans.

And that got me thinking. People don't usually eat walkers and not because it's human flesh (we all saw those cannibals' reaction when they found out about Dale's leg), but because it's rotten and poisonous. Although the cannibals survived the leg, didn't they? We didn't see anyone die from eating an infected human or a walker, at least not that I remember. And we did see dogs survive a lot of walker blood and likely meat in their systems.

So... Does that mean they're eatable? The walkers, not the dogs. I'm pretty sure that dogs are eatable, but most people don't eat them. It's just like with the walkers!

Yours,
Art Kudryavtsev

You know... I'm not really sure what point you're trying to make. Yes, you can eat a walker and then you'll die because they're filled with bacteria and all sorts of disease. Is it too late to remove this letter?

Nope.

Any chance of a Princess stand alone story like Here's Negan? I need to know more about this wonderful new character!

David

You'll get to know her plenty in upcoming issues. And if that's not enough... well, it will have to be for now.

I wouldn't rule it out completely, but no plans right now. If I were to do another such book, it would be Princess or Jesus as the focus. I'll say that much.

Dead Kirkman and Crew,

I just finished issue #183. It was fucking great! I don't know how you do it, but THE WALKING DEAD has the most unique and unpredictable storytelling I have seen in my whole life. Who the fuck turns a basic journey to Greenville into a drama about police brutality? That's just brilliant! I was also happy to see, that Michonne

can still kick some serious ass. But please get this woman a katana, a wakizashi or a fucking paper knife.

Keep up the great work!
Florian
Hamburg, Germany

As "proper" society has begun reforming in TWD, we have been—and probably will continue—dealing with the societal ills that predate the apocalypse. The Commonwealth has found success in replicating the old order to date, but now maybe we got ourselves a reckoning as the old ways buckle under years of stress.

Dear Skybound,

I, and many others, are nervous about the future of Telltale's latest (and last) Walking Dead adaptation. I got into The Walking Dead because of the Telltale series and I know I'm not the only one. If Telltale cannot finish The Final Season is their any way Skybound's gaming division could hand the project over to new developers to finish the series? Clementine is not only one of the most iconic characters in The Walking Dead, but in video game industry as a whole. Clementine's story cannot end unfinished.

Thanks, Aidan.
#ForClementine

We received a lot of emails like this, and by now you've probably seen the news that Skybound Games will be coming in to help finish off this season. There's a lot of moving pieces, and when we have news to share, you can find it first on @Skybound and @Skyboundgames on Twitter. The first season of this game was instrumental to the growth of Skybound as a company, and Clem is obviously pretty goddamn special to all of us, so we've been working our hardest to deliver to you all something special in return.

Truth!

Hi everybody!

I'm re-reading the whole post-All Out War/Whisperer arc, starting with 127, because I really enjoyed it and I want to see what the show will take from it. I also just finished reading 183. In every friggen new issue the letter hacks are filled with those stupid letters wanting Negan back. Of course Negan was an amazing character, and I think he was better and funnier during the whisperer war rather than all out war, but DO NOT BRING HIM BACK. His time here was amazing, and his ending was, in my mind, perfect. Favorite character, sure, but I never want to see him again. I think bringing him back would ruin a lot for me. So I hope you are telling the truth when you say he's done.

I have yet to read a script in which he reappears.

I have yet to write one.

One other thing I keep thinking about is Carl's

eye hole. I've never seen a guy with his eye socket exposed so I'm just curious what it would look like if you shined a flash light in there. We only ever see it as black, so like, is there some sort of muscle there that is keeping his brain in? Scar tissue can't fill in a big void so there'd have to be something there. I don't know, I'm not a doctor and I don't want to google image search it. In 182 you can sort of see some depth in there, so yeah, how deep does that thing go? Nothing sexual, I promise.

I'm not Google searching this shit either, bro.

The brain is in an enclosed cavity within the skull. There's some holes in the back of the eye socket for nerves and "stuff" (so I sound really credible here). So Carl's BRAIN is NOT exposed and hidden in the darkness at the back of his eye socket. There's some tissue back there that's exposed... but most of what is there is exposed bone.

Oh and I feel like this hasn't been said since probably issue 30 or so but, the artwork in this book is phenomenal. Whenever I go back and re-read some issues, I take more time to really look at the art, and yeah, thumbs up all around.

Bye everybody!
Tyler Okrzesik
Milwaukee, WI

Charlie! Who is just now about to wrap up his tenure as UK Comics Laureate and passing the torch to Hannah Berry. He's a good egg.

People have praised Charlie consistently well past issue #30, and rightly so. He's the backbone of this series... all I do is run around and hang the meat on his sturdy bones. Yeah, I'm leaving that in... I'm proud of that comment.

Hello team!

Wow, I didn't know what to think with this issue. This issue felt...surprisingly normal.

Maybe it started normal...

Other than the walkers we saw between Greenville and The Commonwealth, it almost didn't feel like a zombie comic!

But holy hell, things went from 0-100 real quick, but you'd think this wouldnt be the first time something like that happened?

I'm really geared up now y'all, I can't wait for next issue!

Andi Tiscareño
El Paso, Texas

I think we're about to hit a phase of TWD where a lot of things that have never happened before are about to happen...

AND I THINK THAT'S A GOOD THING! I think after over 180 issues... this book is at its best when it DOESN'T feel like a zombie comic. Your mileage may vary...

Dear Letter Hacks,

Have you guys given thought to the wider picture of restoring America? Is Mr Grimes going to be the new George Washington or will they return to the old US system and constitution? If Civilisation is restored will people be given an amnesty or will there be Nuremberg style trials for some of the worst offenders. Rick Grimes has given up on Capital Punishment like most American states. Will he allow Same Sex Marriage as well?

How are the walkers going? They must be past peak efficiency, something the Final Season of Telltale's Walking Dead brought up, an Ice Age, Iron Age and a Walker Age that will pass in time. How long? They seem pretty neutralised as a risk, even when weaponised by the Whispers.

Thanks,
Jason

Perth, Western Australia.

These are things we will be getting into as the series progresses, so stay tuned, I guess. Except that thing about same sex marriage... that will be allowed, as it always should have been. If civilization is ever restored in this series, I would hope the characters use this time to correct some of the mistakes made in our history and form a BETTER society, not just an exact copy of what we had before.

Next month... there's a shocking moment in the first five pages that no one will see coming... and then the issue will end and you'll be mad you don't have the next one already. And no one is stupid enough to eat a fucking walker.

Also, in case you haven't noticed it, we did something really funky this issue. If you flip this comic around, you can read the first issue of OUTPOST ZERO (or rather, most of it; it was a REALLY big issue). Humans have crash-landed on a frozen planet not meant to support life... and yet, they've built a new way of life in order to survive. But how long can they hold out? What secrets does the Outpost hold? And what else is out there in the Frost?

There's a lot in there that readers of this comic will enjoy, so please check it out, and if you dig it, the first trade is out now. And then we'll see you in December for the last TWD issue of 2018!

-Sean Mackiewicz

READ OUTPOST ZERO HERE FOR FREE— and then buy the volume one paperback! It's great! You will love it, I promise. See you all back here next month for a very cool issue.

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

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Dwight's wild ride comes to a merciful (?) end. Dwight was a survivor, his ability to switch allegiances key to his longevity... but he never seemed happy. No move made him happy, and while he proved not to be a great leader, he always took issue with leadership. It looked like he finally pulled it all together in The Whisperer War... but that was short-lived. It's also hard to forget, since his redemption arc was overshadowed by that other former leader of the Savivors... Dwight MURDERED ABRAHAM 89 issues ago (!), so there's something poetic about him never seeing the end coming either. You know what? I'm okay with Dwight dying. However, I'm not quite sure what to think about Rick or Michonne's involvement in it... so I'm curious to hear your reactions.

Also, this month marks the end of Bill Sienkiewicz's masterful 15th anniversary covers for us with his depiction of Negan. I was honestly going to avoid talking about or printing letters that mentioned Negan... but Bill's portrait is too damn fine a piece of art for me not to mention. Thanks, Bill!

Who's Negan?

And I just wanted to chime in and say the esteemed Mr. Sienkiewicz's covers that he's done this year are a real highlight in the run of this series. Hitting 15 years is amazing enough, but to have these amazing, personal character portraits to commemorate all the characters we've loved and lost (or will lose) was the icing on the cake. Thanks so much for the amazing work, Bill!!

Also, this is the last issue of 2018... another year done. I want to thank everyone for another great year. Looking at what we have in store for 2019... it's going to be a big year, so buckle up!

Now let's dive into some letters!

Hello Creators of My Obsession,

I want to start by saying I don't know how you continue to make this the most anticipated part of each month to me, but every issue just leaves me wanting more to the full story. This is my favorite series of any platform by far, and I thank you so much for creating it. I have really enjoyed exploring the Commonwealth little by little, and I love the idea of Eugene being able to expand the world with a direct mode of transport (With or without Pamela leading one side of the tracks, though I feel she still has a lot more story to emerge).

Who has to repair all those tracks and clean the walkers from the area? Someone not as smart as Eugene, I'll tell you that.

I am very nervous about Dwight because I love his character and I am deeply afraid that he is going to cause trouble and it won't end up being good for anyone, but especially not himself.

Does it feel good to be right, Ryan?

Does it?

One question I had was will there ever be a bit of expansion of animals? I know they are more vulnerable than humans in this intense and dangerous world, but I have to think somewhere in the world there was someone who tried their best to save a group of animals. I work at a humane society and if this world were to become a reality I have plans to barricade the shelter and make it safe until civilization begins to emerge again (Like it is doing now in the comics). Because the world isn't the same without a nice dog in the neighborhood. Have you ever thought of a shelter being located in the Commonwealth where someone may have been protecting the pooches, cats, and any other species that could've been saved? Either way, I love the Walking Dead universe and I am immensely excited for the show to return (4 DAYS) and I cannot wait to see how this volume of the comic wraps up. I hope there are more volumes for many years to come. I will be reading them decades from now if we would be so lucky to be have this wonderful universe that long.

Sincerely,
Ryan J. Finigan
West Jefferson, OH

When I read this, I first thought you meant, has there been a population explosion among animals? So that's what I'm going to answer. Because, face it, without humanity actively trying to encroach on natural habits and destroying them, nature would allow wild animals to thrive again. That's even factoring in walkers. Most animals would smell those a mile away and just stay the hell away—or hear them and scamper off. (I'm picturing deer in my head. Have you ever gotten close enough to a deer to pet it? Hell no! They're always scampering off before you can admire their cuteness up close.) Now I just want to see an entire issue about a bear fighting zombies and am sad that will never happen.

We had a tiger fighting zombies! And in the early days we even had a zombie eating a deer! We may see more animals eventually. Sorry it's been so animal light for the most part.

Mr. Kirkman, et al-

The last page of issue #184 was encouraging. I would love to see positive change happen without ANOTHER war of some kind.

Agreed. That's why the bastard Dwight had to die.

The scene where Rick gets Pam to help clean up was FANTASTIC. As for Sebastian, I'd love to see him become more than a cliched, one-dimensional character. Yeah, we love to have people to hate, but a title with complex, nuanced interpersonal relationships like this one is beyond that kind of kowtowing to its readers. I'm probably being impatient, but it still bugs me. Speaking of things that bug me, the post-coital conversation between Princess and Officer Mercer was probably the most ridiculous, juvenile exchange I've seen in the series. This is obviously not the case with Mr. Kirkman, but it comes off like an I-can't-get-any-in-real-life-so-I'll-write-characters-who-have-lots-of-sex-and-talk-about-it situation. DEFINITELY an exception to the

normally non-juvenile dialogue...oh, wait. Negan. Nevermind.

Keep up the great work everyone,
Jason
Rochester, NY

Not defending the scene at all, or my work on it, because if you didn't like it, you didn't like it... and that's okay. BUT I will say that I purposefully write Princess to sound kind of juvenile. She's very matter-of-fact, plain spoken, and oddly optimistic and positive, which makes her sound somewhat child-like. Her dialogue in that scene could read as stilted, "I am happy today, today is a good day, things are good," if not read in the way it's intended. She's supposed to be somewhat spastic in the way she talks.

Sorry you didn't like the scene though. I've been known to have my fair share of off-days.

Hey TWD team,

I am a true comic convert, having started reading Compendiums 1-3 then buying the single issues about #160. I so enjoyed the Letter Hacks and the fan's interaction with Sina/Sean & Robert that I back collected the entire series of single issues to read Letter Hacks!

Wow. I don't write any of this to be re-read. I have no idea what I say issue to issue. Don't use anything I've said before against me now!

I've always wondered if I contradict myself at all over the course of these letters columns. I don't re-read or... y'know... recall them at all. To protect spoilers, I am at times downright dishonest in these pages, so I'm sure there's got to be a few oddly contradictory statements here and there. One day I'll sit down and re-read the whole Letter Hacks run (I won't).

Having the benefit of nearly 15 years of hindsight, I have a few questions and a request.

I am glad to see TWD's focus on the human dynamic such that we encounter a society that is not just autocratic in its rule but also in the forcing of jobs without any obvious ability to achieve a higher level of prosperity or individual life choices. This leads me to a common such occurrence when this happens - there is a civilian or military coup who oust the leaders. The Commonwealth looks pretty unstable right now, I think Dwight's idea to set the people free is the right one. But without the military strength, wouldn't the best strategy be to create an organized rebellion among the people? Look how much social / psychological damage a small group did in the riot.

After 5 years in the story, and being a huge fan favorite, can we expect to see Negan again in the future? I think his character is strong enough you could do a spinoff series such as Fear the Walking Dead on AMC or even a Negan mini-series would be great to see. I understand this would put some strain on the team so perhaps a book every other month? #BringBackNegan.

I lied. I do remember some of what I write, and it's no Negan. Or spinoffs. But mostly no Negan.

Who?

I am incredibly excited about TWD Day and have my orders in for the blind bag books. But looking even further ahead to issue 200 - you're getting close! - I have one request. While I enjoy the artistic style of the black and white books, the color covers at times

add a great additional realism. What about publishing the entire issue 200 in color? That would be really impressive, bringing Charlie's great art to life in a whole new way.

You want color now, too?! I love how on its face this is a ridiculous idea... like we've done 199 issues and NOW we're going to do one in color... but I'd also love to see what it looks like. We still have another year to think about this.

Thinking...

Looking forward to the journey of the Commonwealth arc and what the future holds for TWD!

All the best,
Tom McElroy
Austin, TX

Us, too, thanks for being along for the ride, Tom!

Still thinking...

So it seems to be a consistent habit of mine that I normally write in whenever Dwight is doing something. Issue #184 is not looking promising for the future of Dwight, this dude just has to keep starting problems and acting out. I'm hoping this isn't gonna lead to an eventual brutal death, but I am starting to question how much I actually like him. Hopefully he gets laid and just chills out eventually.

He seemed to have a healthy relationship with Laura, so I don't think a lack of sex was the issue. Also, now that Dwight's gone, that mean you won't write in ever again?

Two other quick points I wanted to cover. When is Negan gonna get brought back into the fold? I know you won't give any definitive answer, but man do I want to see how he plays into the world with the Commonwealth becoming an established and permanent power. I'd love to see Negan lead a group again. ;) And the final note I wanted to make, I don't buy action figures or merchandise for many things in general. But I really do love these figures for the comic series. I actually just went out of my way to buy Beta, R.I.P. But I think it would be a huge mistake to not make either a Mercer or Commonwealth guard figure. Preferably both. Love all the hard work and the direction you're taking with this series!

All the best,
Brent from Pittsburgh

That Beta figure is pretty cool. Obligatory plug for the Skybound online shop for all the cool figures we've made—like most recently, Princess!—and who knows, maybe Mercer will be next.

No comment.

Sup guys/gals. Something that's been on my mind: why hasn't Eugene made a push for a team to go to the Library of Congress and attempt to save some of the intellectual and artistic properties there? Especially after the War w the Savivors concluded and there was a time of (seemingly) relative peace and prosperity. Perhaps there's information and/or art that could help them in infrastructure, transportation (like patented plans for a coal-powered train, perhaps?) or help future generations know what once was society and give them something to stride for reclaiming/surpassing. It'd prob be in decent enough shape just like when the first road crew found the canned food in Wiltshire Estates Rick surmised correctly that ppl go for the high ticket items in looting first, books and papers would prob be ignored. Also it'd be great to see Charlie draw the library and that section of DC.

My guess is it's not a priority compared to other survival needs. Also, from when we last saw it, DC was still infested with walkers, making it no cakewalk to secure any of these assets.

Yes, that.

Anyways, thanks for producing this comic every month, it's rad af. Also, as a veteran I loved Abraham and thought Eugene was such a cowardly fuck for The Lie, but man, he's become one of my fav characters.

Shaun Kerr
Athens, GA

I love how fans get to watch these characters grow and are able to change their minds about them. That's always awesome to hear! Thanks!

Mercer has certainly attracted a lot of my interest in this latest comics and i was wonder how tall is he because in the comics he looks massive at least 6'4.

Thanks
Tom, Australia

That's a fair guess. The boots give him a slight lift and the mohawk is easily worth an extra inch.

Hi Robert, Sean and everyone at Skybound,

In August we were on a 20 day, 3.500 mile trip through California, Nevada, Utah and Arizona. We often had the impression of being on a movie set: we 'know' your country thanks to tv shows and films and books and comics but being there for real was an amazing experience!

On our first day in L.A. we went to Universal Studios Hollywood and had the opportunity to see The Walking Dead Attraction: lots of roamers indeed, my 16 year-old daughter Louise wasn't that impressed but I took a cool picture of her with a man at the entrance wearing a bloody blue jacket, my 13 year-old son Gabriel made us laugh because he was sooooo scared by roamers trying to reach him!!

We have seen so many beautiful places and things and met so many nice people during our trip, but that's not the point: while driving (and not driving, actually) I like to listen to some music, and one day on US 101 I was listening to The Narrows by Grant Lee Philips and I wondered: what is the place of music in a world like this? Do people sometimes sing? Do they pick a guitar and play some acoustic versions of songs they remember? What kind of music are they thinking of? (I guess in the Commonwealth some people have 'Rage Against The Machine' in mind!). Yourselves, are you listening to some music, while working or not? What kind?

That said, thanks for all these amazing stories you wrote since the beginning; thank you for having sent Negan out of the place; no thank you for having killed Andrea...

Yves, from France.

There's probably a lot of singing. I imagine it's all bastardized songs from what people can remember, so they get like four lines right, and then just hum, mumble through the rest, and make up new lyrics. And a lot of people who can't sing "Sara Smile" in the right register or something.

There not being any sound in comics, it's not something I've ever really thought about. There's definitely more singing and music in the show. In the comic, singing would just be words

with music notes nearby, and I've never thought that really looked good. And anytime there are songs in books or comics, I'm COMPLETELY incapable of making them sound like songs in my head as I read, so maybe I'm biased!

As for what I listen to when I'm writing... lots of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and the somewhat related Dirty Three. (I know I've answered this in a past letters column). I'm pretty much an old man when it comes to music, so I listen to a lot of Neil Young, David Bowie and Bob Seger. My favorite new music is Fleet Foxes. I mostly listen to music that is mellow and calming... but right now I'm listening to Metallica ...And Justice For All.

Hello Robert, Sean, Charlie and all TWD Crew.

Long time reader, I am admin of only "TWD Polish Comic Group" on Facebook and on behalf of Polish readers sending kindest regards, we all love you! :)

In couple of last LH you and Sean gave us hints that we might never see Negan again. For sure lots of readers asked when he's coming back. Maybe I am in the minority but... As much as I adore Negan I don't want him to return! 174 was the PERFECT way of saying goodbye to him and it has moving dramatic development. The ending, burning the bat turns us EPIC full circle to the beginning of Here's Negan. Man, it was so fucking poetic when he goes away into the sunset (or rather fullmoon). Do you know that no main character has ever left this story just walking away? Negan is unique, as always.

Second thing, I see what you're doing here with Michonne. ;) Man, I don't know if don't love her more than Andrea, it will be another awful loss. Mich was always so complicated character, a troubled soul. I'm glad she finally has found daughter & some peace. Btw, the moment when she hands over katana to Eugene was incredibly drawn (Charlie's master!) and touching as hell. Here's my question: could you reveal what is Michonne's law specialty? Btw, was Governor Milton really a governor or other kind of politician?

Thank you for continuing this epic story, can't wait to see more CMW drama!

PS Definitely #TeamMercerPrincess!

Sincerely,
Peter Macioszek,
Lodz, POLAND

Have I said Pamela was even a politician before all this? In my mind, she might have had political aspirations, but she definitely wasn't a governor before. Which makes their whole "do the jobs you had" policy very hypocritical.

Who is this Negan everyone keeps bringing up?!

See you in January! I wouldn't say a thing that could possibly spoil one moment from the next issue. We wish you the happiest of holidays and a happy New Year... I hope Dwight's brains leaking on the floor didn't ruin anything. Thank you for being fantastic fans. Onto Year 16: the year TWD gets to legally drive a car. Finally!!!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Oh my god... 16... legal driving age... I'm... I'm getting so goddamn old. Don't talk to me until January. Yeesh! I created a comic that would be old enough to drive if it were a human. This is so weird. See you next month!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Dwight may be dead, but the repercussions of his death are only just beginning to be felt. Also... how about that Princess? Curious to know if her talk with Mercer changes the way any of you view her. I hope so, you semi-unfeeling fucks!!!

Coming in hot today for no good reason except it's Friday, I've got a cup of coffee, and I'm making comics. What's not to be amped about?! I have good feelings about this Letter Hacks. I've done a whole bunch of these and this one felt better than average.

Oh, man... let's dive right in!

Hello Kirkman and company!

First things first, Sean said "nobody is stupid enough to eat a fucking walker" but The Governor definitely did, and he said it tasted like shit. He was also stupid enough to fight Rick Grimes though so what can you do?

I stand corrected, but also, yeah, Governor was nuttier than squirrel shit.

I was a huge fan of issue 185, it hit a lot of high points. Rick talking about Andrea had me crying over my breakfast as well.

Dwight's little stunt was weird but the point was made. I loved when Rick visits him in jail and Dwight starts his speech only to get shut down. Nice to see Rick isn't blind to the Commonwealth errors and even more exciting to see Mercer's approval of Rick as a leader. (I thought we were heading to Rick V Mercer so this is a pleasant surprise!)

Thank you for the amazing work and keep at it!
Joshua Smith, NB, Canada

Rick is the absolute best at being pretty cool and genial, and then turning on an absolute dime to shut—shit—DOWN. Really something he's embraced since #127.

Wait... so my characterization IS consistent?! Whew!

Hey guys,

In response to Art's letter in issue #185 regarding his inquiry as to why walkers are edible for dogs and not humans; I believe this is because dogs possess a much smaller digestive tract and can process food much faster than us.

Carnivores like lions and tigers (Shiva!) can survive on a diet consisting of strictly meat because of the design of their bodies, if omnivorous creatures like ourselves were to attempt this, since the meat takes a lot longer to digest, this would eventually lead to cardiac problems, thus a balanced diet is recommended for a happier, healthier and longer life!

This is why I believe animals can snack on the uncooked (un)dead without suffering the same infectious repercussions that humans would.

Dennis Gereb
Göteborg, Sweden

I am no nutritionist, but this is at least interesting reasoning. It explains why they can process the meat, more than why it doesn't zombify them. Still—attempts at applying science to TWD will get printed.

To Robert Kirkman and team,

I have just finished issue 185 of TWD and I am writing to you about something particular. The child sex. My jaw dropped to the ground when Lydia licked Carl's eye socket and then had intercourse with him in issue 137 because they are both underage. I wasn't even sure if there was consent at first.

Then in the current issue, Sophia bitches about there not being any boys to have sex with. The fact that she is only 14 and wants to lose her virginity already encouraged me to write this. I don't know what kind of rules about sex have changed when the apocalypse started but I am a teenager and I'm not worried about doing the wild thing any time soon.

I know that you haven't done the wild thing because you call it the wild thing. That's no judgment on you having done the wild thing or not. Do the wild thing when you're ready because then that's all you're going to want to do for a while.

My question is what are your thoughts on the underage sex your characters are having and why are you having them do it? (Not accusing you of anything.)

Also, when will you have your first transgender character in your comic? I am a supporter of LGBTQA+ rights and I believe the zombie apocalypse is the perfect scenario for people to embrace and except who they really are. The example being someone who comes to terms with wanting to be the opposite character. Do you think you can squeeze the character in any time soon?

From your die hard fan

Matt Jarek
Milford, Massachusetts

As far as my thoughts on underage sex... I'm just aware that it exists. While it's perfectly normal for you to be a teenager not looking to have sex, surely you must have peers who are. All that said, I think it's pretty believable that people grow up faster in apocalyptic situations.

No plans for a transgender character right now, but that could change in the future. Stay

tuned. There is a great transgender character in SAGA, but you might not be old enough for that book yet.

I have been reading WD since issue 36 (Caught up with trades before). I've religiously watched every episode LIVE and not DVR'd (Most of the time). I thought it was time to write in and tell you I love you all. With Rick's last episode being followed up with another superb issue in #185, I just thought it was time. I do have ONE question that must be answered. Approximately how much time has passed from issue one to #185? I'm guessing 10 years? On the show... about 5 years before the obvious time jump we see in the tree episode trailer?

The comic is more than four years since #1, though closer to Year Five... if we're not there already. A lot of time's passed recently with every trip to the Commonwealth.

At some point I should work this out more... but in my mind it's been longer than five years since the comic started. I don't like to pin things down officially, but the first 12 issues alone could have been a year.

Could have, but totally weren't. If you follow the seasons, the bad stuff started happening late summer/early fall... and we're nearing the end of winter by #12. My secret timeline document knows ALL.

Also... I feel like I know the ending of the series. In fact I'm pretty sure I KNOW the ending. Therefore, I won't write it so this letter has a chance of being published.

Sincerely,
Dink in Missouri

BOLD PROCLAMATION!!!

I have zero clue what's coming issue to issue, so you must be Nostradamus, bro.

I promise you don't know the ending.

Dear Walking Dead,

Super rare variants? Don't you guys control the means for printing and distribution? Sounds like artificial scarcity.

Isn't every variant—and basically everything manufactured—controlled by their manufacturers? Yes, super rare variants were intentionally made scarce.

Kudos to your team for milking the property for all it's worth and jamming it into every medium possible (I'm still waiting for The Walking Dead: the flamethrower).

Honestly, this flamethrower idea isn't that far off. Give us a couple of years.

Jamming? You make it sound like a negative thing...

But the idea of super rare variant covers reeks of tactics that led to the comic industry crash in the 90s. I imagine that a good chunk of your sales come from digital comics, so the variant covers are really just targeting die hard fans who are close enough to a local shop to actually buy trades. It seems predatory against your fan base.

Physical sales still make up the majority of

our monthly sales, which is true for every comic out there. We're very conscious of the impact of variants on the industry. It's something we try not to abuse, which sounds silly considering we just did variants every month on the regular series for the past year and ALSO 15 variants on reprint issues... and then custom store variants for comic shops. But... it was our 15TH ANNIVERSARY. We wanted to do something special for fans and retailers.

We've received overwhelmingly positive feedback and also sold a lot of comics. The 15th anniversary items were conceived to appeal to new and longtime readers; we didn't expect everyone to buy everything. Hardcore TWD fans will go out of their way to collect super rare variants, but it's ultimately every reader's choice to buy or not buy. We didn't even announce the super rare variants until orders were already in, so we weren't trying to pump retailers to over order, more trying to surprise fans who didn't know these variants existed until they opened their polybags. Whether you agree with it or not, there's a lot of thought put into every decision we do around here. Are we going to go all out again like this any time soon? Absolutely not.

But I guess if the market bears it, and you guys can cash in, why the fuck not?

I guess I just expected a little better from one of the most popular titles in the industry right now.

Not mad just disappointed,
Trevor Johnson
Oak Park, IL

While we are one of the most popular titles in the industry... the ones that are more popular, books from Marvel and DC, use variant covers WAY more. So that's an odd standard to hold us to. The new Iron Man series launched with something like 30 variant covers.

Now, while I'm not the biggest fan of the glut of variants or the common practices of today's market, I have to say that I understand it. And comic book COLLECTING is just as viable a use of this medium as reading is. It's okay to be a collector, it's fun, it's rewarding in its own way. It's NOT a bad thing to be a comic collector... I've bought more than a few comics over the years on the basis of collecting them. Hell, I own an entire short box of Amazing Spider-Man #344. What's up with that?!

First appearance of CARDIAC—that's what's up!

Hiya!

Long time fan. Second time writhing in. My first letter was an over analyze of the variant covers for Whisperer War, suffice to say my theory on Negan killing Dwight and betraying everyone did not come true, though I do like the direction you've taken Negan in the latest issues. (don't worry I'm done with the Negan talk)

Instead I wanted to ask about a couple things, when you originally wrote Dwight as a character did you always intend for him to be a sort of double agent type archetype, or did you have other plans with him at first? he was always such a hate-able fuck bag (but you just love to hate him). I think it's interesting how these kind of characters change as

the comics go on, Dwight has become one of my all time favorite characters and I love all the attention he's gotten in later issues.

With Love From Canada, Robin~

P.S. I know this is going to sound hella mushy and lame but issue 172 holds a special place in my heart now thanks to Yumiko and her "Watch how simple it is to come out" and "no one cares what you're like" attitude. I'm sticking to that moto as I begin transitional therapy and I wanted to say thanks for the words of wisdom and relatable characters to help me through these tough times, I look forward to the new issues. New characters and the new world order! and hey if you ever need a name for another lgbt character I've heard Robin makes for a pretty cute name.

I will keep that in mind, Robin! Thanks for your letter, and congratulations on the start of your journey. I'm very happy for you. That's awesome to hear, so thanks for sharing.

As for Dwight... I'd be lying if I said I knew where his character was going to go from his first appearance. I don't recall 100%, but I'm pretty sure I didn't know he was a double agent until I'd come up with that scene set at the Kingdom and needed a double agent to move things along. There are some characters where I have a plan for them and I'm just checking boxes as I write them issue to issue, and there are other characters where I could never foresee what the future held for them as they grow and change through the narrative. I never could have known how essential Eugene would become to the future of this book. When the characters surprise you... that's when the writing is the most fun.

Dear WD Crew,

"And no one is stupid enough to eat a fucking walker." Funniest thing I've read in awhile. Thanks, Sean.

The Governor was stupid enough, and I was stupid enough to forget that. Why don't we talk about other mistakes I made...

So it looks like Rick has got two hands as he's grasping Dwight's cell on the next to last page of #185. Since that's not possible, the only thing I can figure is it's some kind of nifty Walking Dead secret symbolism. I think I've got the meaning. Rick's right hand looks like a raised fist and the raised fist is usually meant as a symbol of defiance and solidarity. This is Robert's way of telling us that he will always defy the typical repetitive comic storyline and continue to bring us new and fresh product. That when we, The Walking Dead Family, a family made up of many different colors and cultures and beliefs, are united we are stronger and made better by this unity.

Do I get a No Pri...wait...what?

Sorry.

Rob Shelor
Roanoke VA

Rob, I appreciate you embracing the spirit of the No Prize (Rest In Great Power... Stan Lee) while everyone else just called me a dummy or asked to have my job. Mistakes were made, yes, but we're now hyper vigilant about Rick's hands to the point where we caught this from happening in a future issue BEFORE it went

to print... though if Robert wants to chop off Rick's other hand to make my job easier, sorry, left hand... I mean, RIGHT hand... oh, fuck it.

I blame Charlie... I mean... how can you forget a guy is missing a hand? And it happens SO often. We've caught it more than a few times over the years... and it's slipped into a print more than a few times as well.

That's NOT in any way to let you off the hook, Sean. You suck.

I'm glad I have two hands so I can extend both middle fingers.

Hi Sean and Robert,

Can I share I love the ongoing development of Eugene's character? From his "walkie talkie failure" lowpoint and traumatic loss of Abraham and capture by the Savivors - to his creativity and inventiveness applied towards the creation of ammo to prep for AOW, his historical recreation of useful infrastructure in the communities and now an attempt to rebuild a locomotive for transport, he's really become the most indispensable character in the series IMO. I have also enjoyed seeing Eugene grow as a character, showing that he is more than just a smart, if a bit antisocial, member of the community. His relationship development and fallout with Rosita was great drama and now we're seeing the start of a Eugene & Stephanie hook up. Awesome!!! I don't recall seeing Letters about Eugene but I feel he is one of the most fascinating characters in the series.

All the best,
Tom McElroy
Austin, TX

To Eugene, the best of us!

I literally just mentioned him a few letters ago!

Dear Walking Dead Team,

First off, I just wanted to thank the folks at Skybound with the strength and force of a thousand suns, for agreeing to finish the Telltale Games fourth season! It means a ton to fans of the game, and to fans of the Walking Dead series in general. So a huge, sincere thanks for saving our beloved Clementine from the bottomless pit of an unfinished storyline!!

Oh, we're in the thick of it now! I just did a playthrough on 403 and even though I'd already read the script, there are some genuinely jaw dropping moments. By now the release date for that episode should be public (check @Skybound Games Twitter for latest news).

Now, for some character-based questions that everyone is wondering about but isn't willing to say (or maybe it's just me):

1. How did Jesus become so badass?? I know this has been asked before, but PLEASE address this at some point, otherwise I'll just assume that he's actually Jesus, since it seems to be the only current explanation for his demigod-like powers.

Uh... he's actually Jesus? Seriously though... he had a lot of training over the years. That's the only way to get badass. What the training was... maybe we'll see it eventually.

2. Not that it matters anymore, but how did Ezekiel keep his dreads so white? Was he wayyy older than he looked, or did he spend significant amounts of time on hair care & maintenance? It looked awesome as feck, but every time I saw it, I would ask myself, "How-? Why-? What-" So answers please!

That was actually birdshit. Lots and lots of it.

I'll leave it at that.

3. Now, a more serious question: Why is it that women are portrayed as somewhat sex-crazed in this series? It's always women who initiate sexual acts or kisses, women who cheat on their partner or "seduce" men in positions of power or strength, etc. I'm sure you mean well, but it comes across as some weird male fantasy. In real life, men are usually MUCH hornier than women, but this comic only seems to show lust in women or in creepy/rapey men. Even one of Michonne's first actions in the series was to go down on Tyreese! Also, much younger women are consistently attracted to older men, like Eugene and Stephanie's adorable but honestly out-of-the-blue attraction. I would appreciate it if y'all could switch this up a bit!

I don't think Stephanie is young. If anything, I'd say she and Eugene are both in their forties. As to your other question, I wouldn't say all women are sex-crazed in this comic. While there have been aggressive women at times... there have been many who weren't. Andrea wasn't sexual aggressive at any point.

(Though she and Dale had a healthy sex life.)

Maggie and Michonne's actions were very different and had different motivations. I see what you're saying though... but over nearly 200 issues we're going to see a lot of different characters behaving in a lot of different ways.

I also wanted you guys to know that this series has been a huge part of my childhood! I'm turning 21 this year, and I feel as if I grew up and matured along with Carl and Sophia. The way that everyone in this series overcomes hardships to create a better society has inspired me to study politics in college, to learn how to solve some of our society's problems as reflected by the smaller societies in the Walking Dead. Don't stop writing, or my little brother will never catch up with me!

Ada
Berkeley, CA

Thanks for writing in, Ada! I promise to keep you comfortably ahead of your brother for as long as I possibly can!

In the letter column of #185, Kristoffer Infante didn't explain why he wanted the book canceled or rebooted after #200. I agree with you that rebooting the book is a terrible idea, but I thinking canceling the book is a good idea, and here's why.

We're doing this? Great—LET'S DO THIS.

SIGH.

There is only one plot in this book: Rick and Company meet another group of people, a fight ensues, Rick and Company win. That's it. That's all you ever write. It's either the Governor, or Negan, or the Whisperers, or the Commonwealth. But it's the same thing over and over and over. It's either blah, blah, blah day to day survival details, or blah, blah, blah politics.

You say this book is at its best when it doesn't feel like a zombie comic. I disagree 100 percent. There were no zombies in #185, and when it doesn't feel like a zombie comic, it's even more boring than usual.

I was working in the bedroom of 14 year old last weekend, installing some cabinets, painting, etc. He was watching TWD tv show. There was a great story about a young girl who liked zombies, who thought killing them wasn't always necessary, who murdered her younger sister, and who was consequently killed by an adult woman who realized this young girl was crazy and dangerous to everyone around her. You just don't see that kind of variety in the comic.

It's always blah, blah, blah.

At least the TV show has zombies. I remember when the comic went 9 months without any zombies in it. Boring.

So yeah, if this comic was canceled after #200, I wouldn't care, because I don't really care anymore anyway. The death of Andrea was the end of it for me. I just bought the last 12 issues because of the nice covers by Bill Sienkiewicz. I'm done being bored. No doubt you have something special planned for #200. Maybe I'll buy it, maybe I won't.

Right now my apathy runs pretty deep.

Danny the Mc

Well, should I even bother to respond since you won't be reading this?

First... that story you mention from the show is FROM THE COMIC! That happened in the comic, just in a slightly different way. So it's kind of odd to use that as a way of saying the show is better than the comic.

I've heard the "Oh, man... TWD just recycles the same story over and over again," complaint many times. And if you're not into the book anymore, that's fine, stop. I completely understand. Some people aren't up for the long haul. That's totally reasonable, and if #167 (the death of Andrea) was the end for you, I wholeheartedly thank you for the time you've devoted to this series up to that point.

BUT "meeting new groups and getting into conflicts with them" is... every... continuing story. It's every TV show. New enemies, new antagonists, new conflicts... and each of those conflicts are different in some way... and result in the characters learning new things and growing in new ways. The same way the conflict with The Governor and Woodbury is COMPLETELY different than the conflict with Negan and the Saviors... in almost every single way. If you think those two huge storylines are the same, this book just isn't for you. And that's fine!

Didn't I say this would be a better than average Hacks? Next month, those ripples from Dwight's death? They keep spreading out. Plus, a character you know and love meets some characters you know and love—for the FIRST TIME.

-Sean Mackiewicz

It's gonna be great!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Am I surprised at the outpouring for Dwight? Sure. Absolutely. Seems like the only dry eye was Dwight's crusty left one. I feel like I have a pretty good pulse on fan favorites, and then you folks surprise the hell out of me. Did you really love him, or do you just love giving us grief? All that I know for sure is that his death didn't solve much, and the Commonwealth is plummeting on the "Places I'd Enjoy Living in the Apocalypse" power rankings. Let's squeeze out a couple eye drops in remembrance of the dead, one last time.

Dwight was always a favorite of mine, but I, like Sean, have been very surprised by the outrage over his death. I guess we're doing our jobs right, after all? I'm always sorry if a death in this story upsets you... but that is the price of admission here, to a certain extent. ANYWAY... let's go ahead and dive into the mail.

I can't wait until we get all the letters about Eugene...

We've lost so many people this year. Stephen Hawking, Jahseh "XXXTentacion" Onfroy, Steve Ditko, Aretha Franklin, Scott Wilson, Stan Lee, and Stephen Hillenburg are just a small fraction of the notable people that we've lost. Some were due to age, while others were in cold blood or an illness that took them too early. Needless to say, 2018 has been a shitty year. X had so much potential in his life before he was killed at age 20, and Hillenburg left a legacy of the series that is Spongebob Squarepants that gave me the interest in drawing at age 8 and later led to my fascination in comics by reading The Walking Dead by 9 and aspiring to become a comic artist by 11.

Just when I had the ever-so-shrinking hope for the rest of 2018 and looking forward to reading the newest issue of my #1 comic series of the past 7-8 years, another legendary figure in history is lost this year: Dwight. One of my absolute favourite characters, besides Andrea (whom we lost in 2017), is gone. Just like that.

Doesn't matter who your new favorite is. Dead in 2019. BET.

Heh.

To be honest, I'm very disappointed in the your development of Dwight for the past year and a half. I really hope there's some valid justification in his send off. I was hoping he'd be one of the few lucky characters that got to surpass 100 issues from his initial appearance. Hell, you were going to KILL Negan before Dwight! That's insane to think. I thought of Dwight as a really good friend of Rick's. His right hand man, if you will. Now he's just lost another friend. :(

I cannot believe you done this to me, Kirkman. I want to cry.

See you in 2019, unless 2018 takes me away too,
Andy Gasal
OG+ Walker
Vermont, USA

Well... he ALMOST lasted 100 issues...

KIRKMAN!

What is wrong with you? How the hell can you kill off the single best written character in your series like this?! The leader of the Militia, formerly a badass member of the Saviors... goes out with a bullet. Honestly, as much of a fan I am, this is first time where I don't care what happens next issue or next volume. You've truly killed my interest for the series, but I'll still be reading since I've stayed this long.

With that, I will also say this: PLEASE kill Michonne now. But first I want Laura to kill her kid, then her, just so she feels the pain. Some poetic justice of being shot in the head by Rick would be nice. She better die within the next 14 issues, by the time Issue 200 is out. Hell, bring back The Whisperers and put her head on a stick for all I care.

Goodbye Kirkman, and thanks for killing the person that got me into this damn comic,

Drake from Indiana

Like I said, strong feelings were evoked.

Kill Michonne? That's a crazy idea... but... maaaaaybe...

Hey Kirkman

I just wanted to talk about the Complexity of Carl and Sophia's relationship. Sophia and Carl truly grew up together, and they had a very close friendship as kids and still do. Just, you keep teasing in each issue their true feelings for each other.

I don't think it's meant to be teasing, just... it's complicated. You can't undervalue long-term relationships in this world, where trust often equals survival. Carl seems awfully sweet on Lydia for the moment, and I don't see that changing... unless we murk her next.

In issue 172, Sophia mentioned that she misses being with Carl, and He confesses that he misses being with her to, but he doesn't want to hurt Lydia. Then in issue 185 Sophia talks about how she wants to lose her virginity to someone, Carl tells her about a few guys that like her but she doesn't want them. Does she possibly want to lose it to the one boy she's cared about for over 4 years? When we see her with Josh, Carl's encouraging her to maybe bond with him, but she looked fairly uncomfortable in my opinion.

Really what I'm saying is, Are there still lingering feeling between them, or Is it just Sophia or Just Carl that still loves the other in that type of way? Their relationship, Friendship or Couple, will always be my favorite in the series because of how unique and developed the two of them are.

Have a wonderful Week/Weekend!

Jaime
Minnesota, USA

Ps. Thank you for putting Sophia back in the series as a sort of main character!

Was she ever out of the comic?

As to their relationship... whatever true feelings the two of them hold for each other, you're just going to have to wait and see. Although, I think it's clear that they are very close and care very deeply for each other.

Geezus fucking Christ! You fucks made Rick kill Dwight because Michonne put them all into a Kobayashi Maru. I'm not gonna lie, my interest in TWD was waning a bit and I decided to stick it out until this arc to see what developed only out of fierce loyalty to my favorite comic of all time. I'm a begging the guy at my lcs to let me smell TWD on Tuesdays generally. Enough bullshit, I love it and fuck you, Kirkman. You've done it again and again and again in this book. I say fuck you

because you're the best at keeping me guessing and shocking the fuck outta me. I'm serious. Bravo. Glenn, Abe, Alpha, Dale, and Dwight all hit the gut and the brain like a brick of shit on a white sheet strapped to a wall. I'm a 39 year-old Mississippi man and I gasped like a shocked toddler first pissing on an electric fence again. The deaths are shocking. But, the tension between Rick and Michonne was pitch perfect and long overdue. This ain't no fairytale. Finding her daughter made her afraid again for the first time in ages. Fear is kryptonite to good people. Goddamn, if I don't see a hotly contested election coming up in the future. Well, as soon as someone assassinates Pamela. My money's on Mercer. He's gonna back Rick. Plot twist extra, Michonne's own blood stumps for Rick too. I may be carrying on in a flight of fancy, but fuck it. I can't see Rick and Michonne having a sword fight duel at high noon or another war. We're entering the political age of TWD. From Rapist Pig Governor to Rick Governor. Full fucking political circle. I doubt I'm even close to your plot. Oh yeah, great art. I'm not trying to downplay the art. It's just the plotting and writing overshadowed it this month. Both are always a feast. That plodding slow burn paid dividends.

P.S. I was saying fuck long before Batman Jr. came along. But, fuck it if he didn't force me to upgrade my fuck game.

Timothy Dunaway

Timothy—you win the Old School Letter Hack of the month non-award. This sort of well-meaning vulgarity used to fill the inbox, and I'm not one to get nostalgic because, again, I have no feelings—but good job by you.

Glad to hear the slow burn paid off for you. I know it can be frustrating at times, but y'know... these stories don't come together if the stories aren't put together just right.

Hello Mr. Kirkman,

Well, you've done it again. One of your best characters is dead. While it is a bummer, I think Dwight had a pretty solid arc and this was probably his time to go. However some of the pacing these past two volumes has really confused me and I hope you have some answers.

Since Michonne has arrived at the Commonwealth she's risen up to be a lawyer on a huge case, had the trial, been on vacation, come back. How long has it been? Why is Magna acting like Rick just left when it's probably been like a month? I still don't know what Oceanside is and why William from

the Kingdom was supposed to be important? Nit-picks aside, I've really enjoyed this Commonwealth arc so far and am excited to see where it goes. Keep up the good work!

P.S. It's been way too long since we've seen winter in this book (Volume 15)

Cal Gunderson
Cincinnati, OH

WINTER IS NOT COMING.

Michonne has been in the Commonwealth for many months at this point... it takes at least a week or so to get to, so there's a lot of time passing between pages here and there. Sorry it's not completely clear, but I feel like it would be tedious to stop and point out when time is passing.

Oceanside is the fishing community where Michonne served on the boat for a while when she was absent from this book after the time jump in issue #127.

Dear Letter Hacks

Wow! I don't think I realized how much I truly liked Dwight as a character until I saw him die.

That may be the most logical response we've received this month.

I'm a bit bummed about it honestly, but thankful that I've been able to go on this journey with Rick, Carl, Dwight, Robert & Charlie. As always, this title is consistently surprising and entertaining and a joy to read. It is simultaneously a wonderful and horrifying ride, and truly the highlight of my monthly comics reading experience.

Sincerely,
Ken Case
Planet Earth

P.S. I wonder how Negan is going to feel about this. My guess is he'll have some choice words.

I bet he will...

Dear TWD Crew,

Yet again, issue #186 was a hit! Two amazing covers and the story kept me on edge from start to finish!

So is it safe to assume there are two 'sides' in the Commonwealth? One that goes with the status quo and one possible faction that is potentially planning a coup? Elodie definitely seemed as surprised as I was to find out that the sheep-like citizens of

the Commonwealth may not have the wool pulled over their eyes like we think they do! I look forward to seeing this develop in the future but, alas, it will be without poor old Dwighty-boy. But more on that in a second...

So is it possible that all this behind-the-scenes drama in the city is building to a conflict around the time issue #200 hits? It is an anniversary issue so I would be lying if I didn't say I was super anxious/excited/like a kid on Christmas morn with anticipation over what may be in store for that one! I can't believe there are only 13 more issues before the next major milestone in The Walking Dead universe!

#200 definitely would be a good place for something HUGE to happen. But so would #189, #190, #191, #192, #193, #194, #195, #196, #197, #198 and #199.

I think the point Sean is trying to make here... is that you may not have to wait until issue #200 for a major conflict to hit.

R.I.P. Dwight! I'm sad to see him go but loose cannons are at risk of unplanned explosions and Rick apparently thought that it was time for Dwight to be permanently benched...and while I did see it coming I didn't see it happening so suddenly. It definitely was a huge surprise to me!

Lastly...can I say I would have loved to see the scene where Mercer took out the rest of the walkers on his own? Please keep him around for a while...we need a good metal hatchet-wielding soldier to keep the others safe. That part of the issue reminded me of way back in the early days of the comic when Tyreese was trapped in the prison gym and no one thought he had a chance to survive...and yet he came out unscathed. Mercer quite simply is an awesomely cool character...and I can't wait to see more of him in the stories to come!

See, I can see how folks would get attached to Mercer. Like Andy Gasal. Andy Gasal probably has Mercer's pic as his screensaver already, and then when we kill him—Mercer, not Andy—he'll have to change it to someone else.

Anyway, thank you all again for yet another incredible issue and I am so excited for the next major turning point in the Commonwealth storyline! Whether it be war (via katana or cupcakes) I'm more than ready to be at my LCS on that upcoming Wednesday in the not too far off future to get my copies. #TWDFANFORLIFE

Sincerely,
Ryan N. Ray
Lexington, KY

Lexington, Kentucky represent!!

(facepalm)

Mr. Kirkman, et al-

Well, I guess you get what you ask for. I requested positive change without a war and you went and shot Dwight. I appreciate what Mr. Mackiewicz said about him never seeming happy and his death being merciful. I am sad to see him go and not get a chance at some kind of true reconciliation, but I think Mr. Mackiewicz's assessment was spot on.

That said, Mr. Kirkman, will you PLEASE give me some insight into why Rick made the decision he did to shoot Dwight? It seemed almost out of character for him. Rick certainly has not hesitated to do what he has felt was right, even if it was difficult or unpopular, but he has always struck me as someone who has consistently acted deliberately and thoughtfully. This decision seemed so quick--no standoff, no attempt to talk Dwight down or defuse the situation. In fact, he doesn't say a WORD from the moment Pam enters the room. The look on his face the whole time is almost one of shock, right up to the point where he pulls the trigger (that whole scene is incredibly illustrated, as usual, by Mr. Adlard). What on earth would cause Rick to make such a snap judgment, especially about someone whose opinion he respected at least enough to give him pause?

Bewildered in Rochester, NY,
Jason

Dwight had Rick at gunpoint recently over the death of Sherry. So he knew him to be a loose cannon who had been dealing with a lot recently. But he was working through it. He'd been urging Rick to basically back him against the Commonwealth in a bid to take over. Rick knew his goals. And he had Governor Milton at gunpoint... he knew Dwight could pull the trigger at any moment.

Michonne and Rick in a room with Dwight who just killed Governor Milton? Rick doesn't know if he or Michonne get out of the Commonwealth alive... and he definitely knows that leads to a war of some kind. MANY, MANY people die... unless he kills Dwight.

Rick had no choice. That's why he had to act so quickly.

Whooooo-Hooooo!

It's about fucking time! You go Rick! So long, Dwight, you piece of shit! Don't let the

door to comic book hell hit you in the ass on the way in (or do let it hit you. Who cares?)

RIP Abraham.

Rob Shelor
Roanoke VA

Rob gets it.

Oh yeah, and I hope everyone involved in the making of the Walking Dead (comics, TV, etc.) has a wonderful holiday season.

Charlie, you rock!

Charlie DOES rock!

Dear Mr. Kirkman and team,

I hope Dwight can rest peacefully now. I always admired his ability AND reluctance to lead. I am feeling sorry for Laura. The dynamic she shared with him has been a favorite part of this book recently. As for Rick, simply shocked. Can't recall him ever having to kill one of his own. I'm glad he sees the new world as something to shape, not be taken over. I am scared for Michonne, and am very much enjoying Pamela's true turn as the villain. More Mercer! Wonderful issue. Keep it coming.

David Martz
Pottstown, PA

Laura kept Dwight in check before, but now that she's without him, sure looks like she's carrying on his legacy.

We will see you next month, when Eugene and Stephanie find themselves in one hell of a predicament.

Also, if you like fun, pop action comics, ASSASSIN NATION debuts in March! You mix the brilliance of two-time Eisner winner Erica Henderson (*The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl*) with the dementedness of Kyle Starks (*Rick & Morty, Sexcastle*) and you get 20 top assassins gathered in the same building to protect the World's Former Greatest Hitman. That's a lot of egos in one place, and guns will go off! Check out this irresistible preview on the following pages! Our first new series of the year may be our most fun yet!

-Sean Mackiewicz

I am extremely excited for you all to get a look at ASSASSIN NATION! It's a great book by a great team. You'll love it!

See you all back here next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Well, this jailbreak has led to some very unexpected consequences, creating a division within the Commonwealth that Mercer may not be able to maneuver himself out of... unless he has Rick Grimes on his side. Everyone's looking to Rick for answers, and we all saw how that worked out for Dwight...

Also, reminder that later this month—March 26th to be exact—the **FINAL** episode of *Telltale's The Walking Dead: The Final Season* will be released on whatever system you play your brain-rotting video games. A lot of talented folks put a LOT of effort into making this episode, bringing the season (and series overall) to a heartbreaking close... so please let us know what you think. There's a ton of action to enjoy in this installment, so much you'll never notice all the awful things about to happen to Clem, AJ and company... #StillNotBitten (for now)...

The Telltale game has been a real source of pride at Skybound for a number of years at this point. It's bittersweet to see it nearing its conclusion, but also rewarding to have gone on this journey and being able to step in and ensure it gets wrapped up properly. I hope you all enjoy it!

And hey, Season 9 of the show is in full swing! And I hope you guys are as thrilled to see THE WHISPERERS come to life as we are here at Skybound Central. New showrunner Angela Kang has just been doing marvelous work over there. And Greg Nicotero's work (both directing and overseeing the makeup effects) continues to be a high water mark. And there's just SO MUCH cooking behind the scenes with TWD now that Scott Gimple has stepped into his overseer role on the TV side of things. Stay tuned for all kinds of news as we get closer to the launch of Season 5 of Fear The Walking Dead and we get deeper into development on this Rick Grimes TV movie. There's some great stuff coming!

But that's enough of that... we're here for the TRUE fans... the comic readers! Not those Johnny-Come-Lately TV people! Let's answer some mail!

(And just a quick reminder, just in case this is hard to keep track. This is Robert Kirkman in italics. Sean Mackiewicz is in plain old bold.)

First things first, huge fan of the show and comics, although I am still upset that my favorite character died in 186 (RIP Dwight). When Maggie asks for volunteers to go to the Commonwealth, Aaron and Jesus were super eager to go out, and a few issues ago they were **POSITIVE** that Beta was dead, but I don't believe them. Is there any chance Beta is still alive somewhere, and could Aaron and Jesus be keeping it secret?

Best,
Justin
Saint Louis, MO

I'm shutting down this baseless speculation now: BETA IS DEAD. (Except on the AMC TV show—where he's good and alive! Well, not good...)

And Ryan Hurst is doing some AMAZING work as TV BETA! A character who is ABSOLUTELY dead in the comic.

I swear, every time I get invested in a character, they're just taken away from me.

I now have no interest in reading any more walking dead issues. Negan was the only character worth reading about.

HE'S not dead!

The "survivors" are the worst people I've ever fucking seen. People think those animals are heroes? What the fuck?

Even if you don't bring him back, can't we have a stand alone, maybe side by side comic, a spin-off or whatever where we can see Negan doing his own thing? I swear it would be so much more interesting than watching these other assholes. Give it some thought, Negan could totally carry his own comic series. And it would be 10000000% cooler than fuckwad Rick, his fuckwad kid, and their fuckwad idiot followers.

Or, you know, Negan could just kill them all which would be even cooler.

- J

This comic has been proudly Negan-free for over a year, and we're eating cans of baked beans to celebrate!

YEAH... how long can that last? Negan's gotta show up... at some point... RIGHT?!

J, jeez... what do you have against all these other characters?!

Hey ya'll,

Loved 187. Princess and Mercer were great, and Carl's talk with Lydia felt like a whole new step in their relationship.

But why does Magna need to send five important members of the communities to the Commonwealth for an update when they've already established radio communication? It just seems like an unnecessary risk.

Huge Jeans

My read is that she can't trust radio communication at this point and needed to get eyes in the field to accurately read the situation. And the way tensions have built these past few issues, it's probably not bad to have extra bodies there by Rick's side.

Good catch... they certainly should have discussed not trusting radio communication. Also, though... Magna asked them to sneak in. She doesn't want the Commonwealth to KNOW she's checking in on them.

Hi lads,

Still reeling over the death of Dwight, I guess it makes sense that this would be the conclusion to his story given his hatred of authority but I'm bummed he couldn't make it further. Honestly for a time during the Whisperer's arc I thought he was going to be the main character moving forward with how he stepped up.

The cover to #151, where he's loaded for bear, with the rifle in one hand and Lucille cocked over his shoulder? *chef's kiss*

Two questions: Why was Magna left in charge of Alexandria over someone like Heath who's been there longer, who Rick would probably trust more? I guess Magna has a history of leadership that Heath doesn't have but I was disappointed because Heath is one of the longest lasting characters and does absolutely nothing nowadays. I get people weave in and out of the story and the scope is so much larger than it was but he really feels like a nothing character now.

Will it start snowing soon? I wanna see some winter Zombie action.

Weather forecast is showing no snow in the coming month.

Keep up the good work.

Regards,
Lou from Northern Ireland

It's the leadership thing, really. That's it. Magna was a leader of a community, and over the time she's been at Alexandria has more than earned Rick's trust. Heath is still more of a runner/loner and doesn't

want the responsibility. Which is what he says to me every time I try to give him more page time in the comic! He's like, "No, I don't want the burden of more story!" All joking aside... we will probably see more of Heath in the future. I'm hoping to try and balance things a little better moving forward. It does bug me, too, when I have trouble finding the room to shine lights on cool characters that exist in this world. I mean... we haven't seen Negan in a year!

More baked beans please, motherfucker!

HI Sean and Robert.

I've been reading TWD since 2016, but have played the games since 2012. And Honestly It's been great to see Princess evolve into an actual person. Nice job on the development.

Now, enough of the formalities, I have a couple of questions for you guys:

1. Is the walking dead a retelling by Carl and Lydia in a How I Met your Mother Scenario? Or a story retold by a distant ancestor to our protagonists to a young child, explaining why we bury our dead?

What?! No.

2. Are there any professions which have gone extinct?

Comic book editor, for sure, but LOTS of others.

3. Do you have anything to say about telltales final season of the walking dead "take us back"?

That I haven't already said up above? Nope. Not spoiling a single moment—especially the barn sequence.

Heh.

But hey, if you're into collector's packs of your favorite games, check out [Skybound.com](https://www.skybound.com) for the Skybound Games pre-order of *The Final Season* physical edition with some exclusive AJ items, only available with this pre-order. Do it by March 17th!

That's all. I'm excited to see this in print.

Your's Disrespectfully
A.H.

Thanks for writing in, AH!

Still lovin' the series after all these years, but..

Princess...

Jeezus! Am I the only one who hasn't taken to this oddball character?? She reminds me of when Scrappy-Doo turned up and fucked up my favourite cartoon...

Ralph, England

There's people that DON'T like Scrappy Doo?! Lemme at 'em!

As a kid... I LOVED Scrappy Doo... does that make you all uncomfortable? In issue #200 we're going to introduce a goofy, floating green alien that only Rick can see!!!

Hello!

I've been watching the show for some years now and it has become a part of life, that I patiently (or not so much) wait for every year for, but I started reading The Walking Dead comics just a few months ago and I absolutely loved the whole ride. I won't go into explaining how great the comic is, exactly how much (a friggin' lot) I like the story, it's progression and the way it is written, or just how absolutely amazing Charlie's art is (*cough* very *cough*), because I'm sure you get all that 'boring' stuff a lot.

Instead I have a few questions (Science?!), and a few things I wanna say.

First, the questions! You may have discussed that before, I read the first two compendiums before heading to the singles, so I missed quite a lot of Letter Hacks, and I haven't bothered to check them (I'm lazy, don't judge me), so!

Don't feel bad. I have no recollection whatsoever of all the crazy stuff I've no doubt committed to print in Letter Hacks over the... 16 (!) years this comic has been around.

Do you think that a time will come, when the walkers are going to be too rotten to move, or even be able to bite? I know they aren't that big of an issue anymore, and that the great threat will always be people, but is it generally possible?

That's probably generations away, but entirely feasible, sure, once all the muscle tissue and flesh holding those meat bags together fails.

There have been zombies seen in the series that are much less mobile. Lurkers were what we called them. We've seen some extra decayed zombies along the way. The natural progression is that, yeah, eventually there will be very, very few zombies in this world because most of them will have died off and decayed away... will the series last long enough for us to get there? Only time will tell!!

And also, do you believe that the world can turn out better than it was before the human downfall, the apocalypse, with all the air cleaning from pollution, and the forests not being cut down and the animals left alone (mostly, do we count the living, eating everything corpses as a big bother to animals, with their senses and stuff???)

Are you asking if a zombie apocalypse is a feasible solution to end global warming?

Abso-fucking-lutely. Let's get Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on the line and work this into the Green New Deal.

I think the zombie apocalypse is already better than the modern world in some ways... few ways... but so, SO much worse in SO MANY other ways.

I really want to say how much I love Jesus (and his relationship with Aaron), Dante (he is real fun), Eugene (real smarty-pants), Maggie, Carl (he is turning out to be a really mature, smart grown-up, I'm proud of him) and last, but absolutely not least, Negan and Princess (!!!). I won't gonna beg for Negan to come back if it is your final decision for him to be out of this comic forever (hmm, somehow I doubt that), but it would be great to see everyone's fun-lovin' criminal once more, and be fully able to see how much he has truly changed (naive or not, I actually believe that).

See above.

NEGAN IS NEVER COMING BACK! Or is he...?

Now let's talk about Princess. I have the feeling she is underappreciated (by that I mean that I don't see her name enthusiastically written in every single letter, because that's absolutely what such a friggin great character deserves.), so I wanna make up for all that. Bravo, really for making her! Hmm, I can't tell if she's really that great or I just have a thing for fun speaking characters like that. Your thoughts?

She's 1000% the Scrappy Doo of this comic, and we couldn't be prouder.

She's great! I love her!

PS: About episode 8, the show. Why that death? Why!? (although there are probably good reasons)

Best Regards,
Maggie,
Bulgaria

We certainly had our reasons... and they've been discussed in great detail online, so do a little searching if you like. I'll just say (spoilers for a MONTHS old episode) Tom Payne was an AMAZING Jesus and I really loved his portrayal. And he couldn't have gone out in a COOLER way, and that moment was so expertly written and directed that I think everyone involved is very proud of the insane debut of the Whisperers on the good old TV.

We will return in April where, let's just say, things aren't going to get any better.

-Sean Mackiewicz

Heh. They sure aren't... THIRTY DAYS, PEOPLE!!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

The war that Rick has been trying to avoid with his recent actions? Well, looks like we have now reached the point of no return as the new Governor is behaving a lot like the old Governor. By the way, this is Sean, and I'm excited to dive into these letters.

Okay, Sean... but first, this is Robert and I just wanted to say I'm VERY excited about where this series is headed, and we've got some monumental episodes ahead of us... so buckle up, dear readers. There's also all kinds of other things going on in the Walking Dead universe, but Sean really wants to dive into these letters, so just, you know... use the internet to find out about all the tv shows, video games and lunch boxes that are coming out in the near future. Don't forget (the recently redesigned) WalkingDead.com can tell you all you need to know!

Now let's get to these letters!

Gentlemen,

I have a technical question: most, if not all, characters seem to carry knives which, of course, makes total sense. I certainly would. However, I'm curious what "super metal" these knives are made from, why has it never been mentioned, and could it be related to source of the zombies?

I, too, have often wondered about these super knives, and I like where this letter is headed.

The knives must be made from some amazing alloy considering how many times we've seen a character stab a corpse in the head, either to (re) kill it or prevent it from rising in the first place. I'm not talking about stabbing through an opening in the skull like an eye socket. I'm talking about ramming the blade right through the forehead or temple. I believe this happens way more in the tv show than the comic, but I don't have specific references.

Correct. We're all on the same page here. We get it.

I'm assuming y'all are city kids, because any farm boy learns early on during butchering: bones are hard. That's probably why our ancestors made tools out of bone. But, just try cutting through the bone in a steak and you'll see: bones are hard.

My buddy theorizes that zombie bones soften and rot, but I see two problems with that explanation. First, numerous characters have taken a knife to the skull immediately after death to prevent rising. Unless living characters are all suffering from skull degeneration, this theory doesn't hold up. And, if the entire surviving population is suffering from Squishy Skull Syndrome (SSS), then it seems like that would have come up in the plot by now. (At least, everyone should be wearing helmets!) Second, I think I may have mentioned: bones are hard. They don't rot so fast and persist in the outdoors for years. It's quite common in the back country to find whitened bones of a skeleton that are still rock hard years after the soft tissue of the unfortunate original creature has long since vanished. I've come upon more than a few

animal skeletons in the wilds, and not one was fragile enough that I could shove a knife through the skull.

Ok, crossing off walker osteoporosis...

Therefore, the knives in TWD must be some special, Uru-style magic in order to penetrate skulls so easily, and that some like an interesting, unexplored subplot.

Sincerely,
Tom the Country Boy

Vibranium. Alexandria forever!

Thanks for the letter, Tom! You're a quite an astute WALKING DEAD reader! While it is VERY difficult to stab someone in the skull, it is, we must all admit, possible. People get stabbed in the skull all the time. It takes a tremendous amount of force and a tremendously sharp blade, true. What you may not realize is that everyone in the Walking Dead universe, TV and comic (and games, lunchboxes, etc) train their stabbing muscles RIGOROUSLY. Much like swinging a baseball bat uses a unique set of muscles that aren't often used to that degree or in unison in normal everyday life, a special training regimen is required to get people in "head-stabbing shape". These people look normal, but I assure you they are conditioned to a near superhuman degree that allows them to stab heads as if they were melons.

So not special knives... special HUMANS. The WALKING DEAD way!

Dear guys that created this addiction of mine:

Didn't expect at all this reaction to Dwight's death by the fans. Was an important character?, yes. Was the military leader?, Yes. Was a total douchebag? FUCK YEAH! I mean he was a badass for sure but he killed the actual Alpha Badass, Abraham, so fuck him. I hope this somehow opens the door for Negan get back to the comic.

Magic 8-ball says: All signs point to motherfucking no.

By now you probably think we're just fucking with you over Negan returning, and we're not. Not on purpose. He's just not part of the story we're telling right now.

So far, loving Princess, a kick-ass lady with a great attitude! Knowing that she has a really rough past give her character new depths that we can all enjoy and also anticipate a great relationship between her and Carl. I didn't decide if i like or not Pamela, too political to this savage world, and her son is one of the most irritating character created so far at the series, remind me of Tyresse's daughter's boyfriend (loooong time ago).

Spot-on comparison! Chris was the WORST. Gregory still stands head-and-shoulders above everyone as biggest TWD douchebag, but Sebastian is definitely shooting up the power rankings with every appearance.

The Commonwealth arc is going great, is weird but satisfactory seeing Rick not in control, this community is so big, that his opinion seems not important, like shit is happening all around him and he can't fix it, and like the control freak that he is, must be drive him crazy. That scene with Mercer in jail getting real with Pamela, her face after hear all of those truths, just priceless! Hope Laura and George free him and start some kind of revolution that ends up with Pamela's son death.

To sum up, fuck Dwight, bring Negan back, I love Princess, Mercer is the new Abraham and Rick's about to lose it.

So who puts an arrow through Mercer's eye in this scenario?

Now back to wait a whole other month

Bye guys!

Daniel Rojas Gonzalez
Chile

Thanks for writing in, Daniel! And, holy heck, you got pretty close with your predictions there. Let's see if you guess Sebastian's fate or not!

Hi Everybody!

I was actually surprised at myself while reading 188, because well, a herd of zombies attacked our group. But what surprised me is I was actually thinking one of these beloved main characters could've gotten bit, and that's I really love about this book -- no one is off limits. Of course they weren't harmed, so everyone was happy and exhaled a sigh of relief... until the last page. I have to say, the only guy I'm really pulling for in this book is Eugene so I hope he's still alive by the time this letter is printed.

What issue is this again?

I do have to say that I'm happy Dwight is dead. He was weak, never wanted to lead but always wanted to start shit with the leaders. He reminded me of people at certain jobs where they complain about how things are run but have no solutions, they just want people out of power, as if that'll change anything. I'm wondering, if the Commonwealth is supposed to be civilized, why can't they hold an election? It seems like they have a dictatorship going on and once what's-her-face is out of power her son will take over. They managed to restore all old roles and ways of life but not elections and term lengths? I mean, that would be an incredibly boring comic, but it seems like they would've thought of that if they wanted to make things like they were before the dead started walking.

True. What kind of game is ol' girl Pam running here?

Lastly, The Commonwealth is in Ohio, they have a football stadium there. I'm just going to assume that those are the Cleveland Browns and they finally won an NFL championship. Although I could see the Browns being the Browns and losing to a team of walkers or whatever.

I would say that the only circumstances that would lead to a Browns' Superbowl would have to be a zombie apocalypse. That the team's history until this point has pretty much been a zombie apocalypse means maybe Baker Mayfield will take them to the promised land soon... but I'd still bet on an outbreak happening first.

Reminder, kids: don't romanticize losers. It'll only lead to heartbreak and unmet expectations.

Update: after originally writing this, the Browns traded for Odell Beckham Jr. Congrats on winning the pre-season, Browns fans! That's ALMOST as good as a Superbowl!

Speaking of the dead coming back to life... Happy Easter!

Tyler Okrzesik
Milwaukee, WI

Tuned out of this letter because of all the specific sports talk. I'm LOST! Next!

Dear Kirkman,

I blitzed through the available material of your comic after ordering the first volume in the summer of 2017. I quite enjoyed it and tried to limit myself to one volume per week, this broke down and by the end of the summer I was caught up. The comic WAS great, you took us through the stages of the apocalypse with interesting characters.

Andrew... bro... I've read this letter before, I know where it's going. So, take it easy, and let's not say something either of us is going to regret.

In that time there was of course many silly/unrealistic decisions but hey it isn't real life and the general story was compelling. However, we are now left with a string of nonsense decisions with no plot to go on. The apocalypse is over, people are re-building if I wanted to watch a government breakdown I would tune into any international news station and find one.

Domestic news is well versed in breakdowns as well.

I mean you are just going through the motions and it is boring. Every new plot twist just seems a misguided attempt to keep the reader interested without actually creating any meaningful story or dialogue. Dwight died, it was unexpected, congrats. My interest with his death begins and ends with that comment. It is time to stop dragging your comic through the mud and just end it with a sense of wonder while you still can.

Andrew

My main issue with this letter is I'm not sure what you'd actually like to see. What was the appeal that made you plow through almost 30 volumes in one summer vs. what you're reading now? I'm biased as all hell, but it's incredibly rude to suggest that this team is just going through the motions. That you don't like the results is one thing, in 16 years you're not going to like all the stories, but please don't shit on the hard work it's taken to sustain such a run.

I feel like the problem here (and I could be wrong and we just suck now, who knows) is that when you read 30 volumes in a few months... you blaze through the story. You may not like a 6 or 12 issue chunk, but you blow through it in a week and the next volume pulls you back in. This book is constantly slowing down and speeding up. Reading it all in one chunk makes it seem like a rollercoaster. But when you catch up... and go back to 12 issues a year... it's like the rollercoaster is suddenly in slow motion. "It used to be so fast and varied, but now I'm stuck in this corkscrew and I'm sideways and my neck is sore and this ride should just end!"

I don't know, we've been getting letters like this from time to time for YEARS... even when

we were in storylines that are now considered some of our best.

But again... I could be wrong, and maybe while I feel like I'm getting better as a writer, I'm actually getting worse! Anything is possible. Charlie and the rest of the gang just keep getting better though, so hopefully they're picking up my slack!

Dear Walking Dead Team

First of all, thank you for the amazing start(-ish) of every month you give us. This comic is truly a joy to read. With that out of the way, two things:

First, how silent are your walkers? They seem(ed) to do an awful lot of grunting, and big herds moving can't be that silent either. How come no one in this book seems to notice big groups of them, until they are right up in their faces chewing on them? Did all their gun firing turn them half deaf?

It's the unfortunate side effect of using magic Vibranium knives--they dampen the sound of approaching walkers.

Sometimes, when you're, say, working on a TRAIN... you don't hear them approaching until they're too close. But we've had characters comment on the fact that approaching herds sound like the ocean. They do make sounds.

Second thing. How is the walker population doing? Even if just one percent of humanity survived, that would mean that everyone would only have to kill ninety-nine walkers to get completely rid of them. We are many years into the story now with at least our group more than pulling their weight - where are they all still coming from?

I don't have a smartass answer for this. But it's not like we're seeing millions of walkers every issue. In fact, one of the most common complaints we get (see below) is that there aren't ENOUGH walkers showing up, so... the walker population's doing alright.

YEAH!! (That's my smartass answer.)

Oh and as a bonus, if you ever need a way out of this mess that is the commonwealth: Last panel, sunset, the silhouette of Negan, grocery bag in his hand, baguette over his shoulder, saying something like "Looks like it's time to save these people". It will be a hit.

He's learned how to bake baguettes?! That's like instant redemption. Because you know folks are just eating dry, seedy hippy bread, and anyone who can make a killer baguette can be my boss any day.

Cheers and love,
Lars, Switzerland

Lars! You've won me over! Negan is back next issue!! BAGUETTES!!!!

i'm not even sure this is kirkman's page but i will post a comment anyway in the hopes that it will reach him. the walking dead comic book is one of three favorite zombie comics

What are the other two?

Yeah, I want to know, too!

i love everything about it from the character evolution to the rebuilding of civilization (what if china beats us?)

If you're interested in what's going on in China, be sure to check out TWD: TYPHOON, our upcoming novel by Wesley Chu, out this Fall from Skybound Books. Wes is setting up an incredible new community that's dealing with the apocalypse in ways we haven't seen in the comic.

Or anywhere else! It's going to be great!

the ONLY aspect that keeps this book from being my favorite comic is the zombie aspect. i have been here since the beginning and i know robert told us the zombies were not the focus. i get that but as a semi-zombie book, i feel there are important tropes the comic should have more of...1)zombies, occasionally, as the main threat. an homage to notld, for example, where a few choice characters have to board up a house and , actually, fear the ghouls outside that are banging on the security. 2) zombies that are shown eating intestines. this is an important aspect of any zombie tale. the comic has only shown this three times, i think. i agree with adlard that some things are scarier when not shown but even notld, dawn, and day take the time to show feasting. 3) fresh zombies. i love that adlard is showcasing new cities where the old civilization has been covered by moss, vines, etc. but i can't believe ALL walkers are that decayed and similar looking. i would like to see the nicotero approach where many walkers are creatively unique. three favorite zombie comics of all time for me and walking dead is 98.5% my favorite. if these aspects were utilized more often, w.d. would be 100%. oh, and creative ways for the zombies to kill their victims as in the television series when they got noah from the rotating door, etc. yes, i desire more world exploring, conversations, passage of time, recreating a real govt, etc. and i love that the zombies are not always the main threat but this IS a zombie book and , recently, it hasn't felt like one. in fact, the zombies feel like an afterthought or slight irritation. thank-you for your time. SINCERELY,

matthew cashel (a man that really wants to see some additional walker/splatter focus. PLEASE!

I think we got a LIIIIITTLE interesting zombie action with Eugene's fire extinguisher trick. But really, the zombie aspect doesn't interest me all that much after all these years. Seeing people caught by zombies and eaten isn't fun for me. And narratively... for people to have lived this long, they need to be smart enough to avoid those kinds of traps... so that's why it doesn't happen as often.

For better or worse, this book has evolved past intestine-eating. I'm not saying it'll NEVER happen again... but it'll never be the focus. I said all I wanted to say about avoiding and getting eaten by zombies in the first 50 issues or so.

See you in May. Also: war--what is it good for?

Also, turn the page and check out these preview pages for EXCELLENCE, our new series by Khary Randolph and Brandon Thomas. A secret society of magicians guides the world with unseen hands... but at what cost? I guarantee it'll be one of the most exciting new series you'll read this year. Hit stores this May!

-Sean Mackiewicz

EXCELLENCE IS EXCELLENT! READ THAT BOOK!!!!

See you all back here next month!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Hey, everyone, Robert Kirkman here. After that ending, I feel it would be for the best if we just move right into the letters. We'll just have to wait and see how things turn out next month.

Long time fan here, coming up on my 8th year being emotionally and torturously invested in The Walking Dead. Issue 189 finally brought the story to a more action packed issue bringing the filler issues to an end. To be completely honest I'm not completely sure if Mercer is a good guy or a bad guy, can you take both sides of his perspective? Is he confused?

Like a lot of this series' characters, Mercer resides at the cross streets of "well-intentioned" and "questionable execution". I'm sure this issue will complicate his legacy—and many others'—even more.

Carl and Rick are finally together again, the original badass duo, the comic version of Rick and Daryl. But I'm starting to want to see less of Rick and more of Carl, I want to see him develop as a young adult and take on more responsibility rather than him screwing Lydia every few issues.

I have one irrelevant question, but it's been on my mind for a few years now: If a person is bit by a walker and they're experiencing the peak of infection before death and they somehow manage to bite another person, will the person who was bit by a feverish infected person turn?

Possibly. I wouldn't recommend testing this theory.

Chris from Sac. California

PS: When will we see Sofia again? I miss her.

Before you see Negan.

Heh.

Dear Robert and Sean,

Please don't kill Carl he has been my favorite character since the beginning and killing him would be worse than watching Andrea die. I see you setting up his death. Especially when he gave his whole speech to Lydia and saying a very heartfelt goodbye to her when he left for the Commonwealth. And then again in issue #189 were the scene between him and Rick about the revolution and Rick saying "he doesn't need to tell Carl what to do Carl will just know" now seems fishy. So please i'm begging you don't kill Carl!

Those are very interesting bread crumbs. I would like you to beg some more before letting you know if they lead anywhere.

On another note I'd like to thank you for giving me and my friends in high school something to converse and theorize about and love whole heartedly. This comic book as given me great friends and something to cherish forever. I'm only writing for the first time because if this is put in issue #191 (hopefully it is) it'll be the last issue that two of my friends in the group get to read with us in 7th period choir class. Those two were the ones who got me into the comic

itself and, after three great years of reading the newest issue every 1st Wednesday of the month, they will sadly be graduating and gone from my high school after issue #191.

Listen, Andrew, I'm not printing this because of your push toward sentimentality. I'm printing it because you're reading comics when you should be choir-ing... and after this issue, these letters should be more fun and happy, and what's more fun and happy than FRIENDSHIP and distracting you from the potential death of your favorite character?

So thank you Kirkman. Thank you Adlard. Thank you Rathburn. Thank you Gaudiano. Thank you Wooton. Thank you Mackiewicz. Thank you to everyone else who ever has and ever will work on this comic book for three great years of me and my friends arguing about who's gonna die next and, hopefully many more years in the future.

Sincerely,
Andrew

You're welcome.

I hope your singing hasn't suffered because of this book...

I'm in the middle of reading someone's comment and it asks why women are portrayed as sex-crazed in the comic and suggests that men are usually hornier than women. I'm going to stop reading this just to respond to this person (or not, because I can't do that) without reading the rest of their comment or the response to it to say... That's bullshit actually. Women crave sex extremely and in a healthy (err, maybe) relationship pretty much always want more of it more often than a male partner. Source: Female, in my 30's, with male and female friends, and every party attests to this.

I actually think it's one of those incorrect things portrayed in media usually, that men are so wanting for it and women are just these side characters that keep saying "no" to let the guy down. Maybe it's because I know a lot of media written by men, and a lot of men actually want women to NOT want it so badly, so they can keep pretending that every girl is a virgin and will only ever potentially have sex with him.

Is this Letter Hacks or Letter FACTS?!

Or that could be going a little too far, sorry, I have some bad personal experiences. Still, anybody can manage to get into a state where they aren't thinking about sex so much... male or female... and I believe it's pretty real that men actually LOSE interest in women if the woman has sex with him too early. What a pain. Tell me more about how annoying it is to be a man, someone, because I'm getting out of control here.

I'm actually into monogamy and don't think I have a relatively high experience with sex, just, uh, for the record. I still always want it more often than my partner and that's been true since my very first one! Good thing I learned early that men don't just want sex all the time, hahaha!

Kim

You raise some good points, Kim, but also, every relationship is different, and sometimes people get gassy and don't want to have sex at that moment. (I'm not sure why I'm printing this except for my stubborn notion that this Hacks is supposed to be FUN.) We're all going to die so I just hope everyone finds a partner (or more) to have a good amount of sex with before that happens. Or not, if you're not into sex.

If you want more info about sex, just go listen to *Savage Lovecast* because that's where I learned everything. That, and those magazines I found in the woods that time. Those were informative.

Sitting this one out. Sean handled it just fine.

Dear Kirkman and Crew

I'm a longtime fan and I'm growing increasingly worried about how much you listen to the letters you get. I fell in love with your story because of the way you told it Robert, not the way the letter column thinks it should be told. You've always had diverse characters and been inclusive better than almost anyone else because no one makes a big deal out of people being gay or coming from different backgrounds, it feels like real life. Magna being lesbian felt extremely reactionary though and that's been a growing trend. "You should have a lesbian" okay next issue Magna is lesbian, "did Carl ever tell Andrea stuff" good question next issue we show Carl told Andrea stuff, "Mercer should be a marine" okay Mercer is a marine. My suggestion for you is to react to letters less or at least wait a while before doing it. It makes things feel forced when the very next few issues change based on the letters and I really think you can do better than that because I've seen you do it for over 150 issues now. Anyway thanks for the amazing story and please keep it up.

This is where it gets dicey, Chris. If we follow your advice, we will just be doing what you accused us of... which I don't believe we do in the first place. So... trust us. Robert and Charlie have had a pretty damn strong creative vision for the past 15+ years that no amount of letters is going to get them to change course.

Carl talking about Andrea had been something I'd been meaning to get to for a while, and I just never could find a good place to do it. Also... Charlie and I have been as far as six months ahead of schedule for the last year or two, so if something ends up the following issue after a letters column, that's a coincidence because that issue was already done when I was writing this letters column.

All that said... yeah, I was a little shocked when I was told I'd never had a lesbian in this book. I discussed it in the letters column, and I said I was going to remedy that as fast as possible. That was a crazy oversight on my part, and it was something I wanted to fix quickly. I think the Magna/Yumiko relationship is a great addition to the book and fits in well with the story.

And Mercer being a Marine is such a small backstory element, it's HARDLY disruptive to the story and yet adds tons of depth to the character.

If readers had said, "Do an issue set underwater" and I did that... you'd have a VALID complaint. But this is some really minor stuff that I think is a great example of why letters columns are cool as hell and should always be an integral part of a comic.

Sincerely Chris H. - Denton Texas

PS. I actually really enjoyed Overkill's Walking Dead. Can we please let them at least finish Season 2? I

love creeping around with friends and taking out zombies with my baseball bat. It's been one of my favorite recent games.

Good to hear you enjoyed the game, but it's been officially cancelled. Sorry. There will be more opportunities to crush walkers with baseball bats in the coming year, so look out for those announcements.

Dear Mr. Kirkman and Mr. Mackiewicz,

Thank you so much for finishing the story of Telltale's The Walking Dead, I just finished the fourth episode moments ago and to quote young Ten, "I was naive." I thought I was prepared emotionally for every twist and turn but I wasn't. I felt myself just tearing up ever slightly at the beginning when Waiting Around to Die started playing in the opening. In the interest of persevering spoilers for everyone, I will simply say I loved it, every twist and turn, every happy moment and every sad moment. I loved it from beginning to end.

I was devastated when Telltale closed, I was devastated that story of Clementine might not be finished and saddened to hear so many talented people who made some of my favorite games, were now out of work. So I was grateful to hear you guys were able to bring back the Still Not Bitten Team and let them finish the story in the only way it should have been finished. I hope Skybound Games continues or considers making more games like TWD. I always thought Telltale could make an amazing Invincible game, maybe you can now.

Your Fan,
Kevin M.
Middleboro, MA

Really appreciative that you—and everyone else who's written in—enjoyed the end of this series. We've said it on multiple occasions, but it warrants repeating: the success of the Telltale game was instrumental in the growth of Skybound and how we thought about this company. Hundreds of people have worked behind the scenes on these four seasons (plus two mini-seasons), many millions have played them, and delivering an emotionally complex and satisfying finale was the only acceptable conclusion to Clem's Telltale story.

P.S. On a personal note, the day you released the third episode, my grandfather passed after a long battle with cancer. I found out and received the phone call while I was playing the episode, and the next scene in the episode, after I went back to play, was the dream sequence on the train. And I won't spoil it, but that scene punched me in the gut emotionally and was the exact kind of thing I needed hear in that moment, it was cathartic for me in a way I could never imagine. So that episode and specific moment will always hold a special place in my heart, thank you and thank you to the Still Not Bitten Team, words cannot express completely how grateful I am but I hope this will suffice.

That's nice to hear. Sorry for your loss.

That's amazing to hear. As creators we can never know how our stories are going to hit a person, so it's always great to know the things we do have meaning for you on levels we could never anticipate. Thank you for sharing that.

See you next month for #192! Be well!

-Sean Mackiewicz

Sorry for the 30 day wait on this one. See you next month!!

-Robert Kirkman

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT: WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

So... Rick Grimes is dead.

Feels weird even typing that. It feels even weirder to be at this point in the story. Rick's death was planned longer than any death in this series. I've been working toward this since I started writing... issue #1. It doesn't make it any easier, but it's been something I've been getting more and more used to as the years got down to months and then weeks... I knew it was coming.

Even before we introduced Sebastian Milton (in issue #177) I knew he was the one who would kill Rick Grimes. For almost a decade now I knew Rick would choose to preserve the Commonwealth no matter the cost... and it would cost him his life.

I've said in interviews for many, many years that everyone dies in this story, and that even Rick Grimes won't survive until the end. While this was always Rick's story thus far, as written about in the first issue, that doesn't mean he needs to be alive to be a presence in the series. This is the story of a world, not a man... it's the story of a world profoundly affected by that man, as we'll see starting next issue... but it isn't exclusively Rick's story.

I can only imagine how upset some of you are, and that's fine, really. By all means, be angry with me (or really, direct it all at Charlie, or Sean if you like) I'm upset when my favorite characters die in things I enjoy (please bring back Han in Furious 9). But like I said in issue #167 when Andrea died... the story is the boss here, and if we stopped losing characters and everything was just happy... this wouldn't be THE WALKING DEAD.

And despite the fact that we don't have Rick Grimes with us anymore... I promise you, next issue and beyond will very much continue to be like THE WALKING DEAD. After 192 issues, I hope I've earned a little trust.

NOW... *I don't like addressing the TV show, simply because it has no bearing on this series. This series informs the show, not the other way around. BUT... we did lose Rick Grimes this year on the TV show as well, although he didn't die. So I feel compelled to state for the record that the events of this issue were in no way a reaction to that. As I stated, this has been planned for a LONG time.*

UNFORTUNATELY *we're actually losing TWO integral parts of this series this issue, as this is the final issue that will be inked by Stefano Gaudiano.*

Stefano came in to ink Charlie's art starting with issue #115. Before then, Charlie had handled those duties himself, but as we went into the bi-weekly ALL-OUT WAR event, he needed some help. Charlie and I loved Stefano's work so much that we asked him to stay on after the event was over and become the regular inker.

Stefano brought a flavor to Charlie's pencils that was distinct, yet paid homage to what came before. He made his mark, but his influence was seamless, he fit in perfectly. There were little flourishes in the work to be appreciated, but nothing that would have been jarring in a series already a decade old. It was a tall order and there were huge shoes to fill and Stefano filled them well.

THE WALKING DEAD *is a well-oiled machine. I trip through the scripts at a pretty good clip and Charlie is THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AND RELIABLE person working in the entire comics industry. It's true. When THE WALKING DEAD grew into the massive phenomenon it has become, I recognized that was because the fans had supported it, and as a fan myself... I wanted to reward that support by making sure we were ALWAYS there for the fans, month in and month out. Throwing an inker into the mix could have*

really derailed what was a runaway train of a schedule.

If anything, Stefano made things run even smoother. He never missed a deadline and often beat them. He never had a bad thing to say and it was a great working experience. So really... I'm sorry to see him go. We all are.

Starting with next issue, the esteemed Mister Adlard will return to inking himself, like he had up to issue #114. Charlie loves inking himself and had missed the process and had been wanting to get back into it for a while, and the next issue seemed like the most logical place to do that. So here we are.

Thanks for everything, Stefano. And welcome back aboard, the glorious inks of Mister Adlard!

Whew... that ended up being a pretty long introduction... so... man... I'll just wrap things up by say THANK YOU for the continued support... even if you're still furious as you read this and have maybe decided this is your last issue (at least give us one more to see if you like it!). I feel like I write this over and over as the months go by but I truly mean it. We wouldn't BE here without you and to be here 16 years later, still telling this story, is a dream come true. So thanks for sticking by us all these years.

Onward--to letters!

Are you sorry for having killed some of your characters?

Sincerely,
Fernando Rosas
Buenos Aires, Argentina

What a great time to write in and ask that particular question.

I regret nothing... but, well... let's see where sales end up after the events of this issue. ;-)

Hi Guys!

I've wanted to write in for so long, but all I could think of to say was "I love TWD" and "please carry on", which is all very nice but doesn't really add much to the discussion...

BUT THEN I had an idea and at last I had a real reason to write in. Am I right in thinking the Dead can seemingly carry on forever unless they are re-killed? I don't recall ever seeing one stop for a rest or just give up on (their second) life. So, if you could harness up some of them and get them to do as their name suggests and simply walk, surely you could use their energy as a power supply? I'm thinking of big hamster wheels or those old horse-powered mills. The Dead don't need feeding, watering or resting, making them a perfect and most efficient energy source. Sure, those hamster wheels are going to get mighty messy - but hey, free energy! I love TWD, please carry on,

Yours practically
The Retroteer

Theoretically, zombies could die of "natural causes" if their brain ever rotted to the degree that it stopped functioning. I'd like to think that walkers are so dangerous that no community would risk relying on them to function. I wouldn't. The only good walker is a dead one.

I'd always wanted to work in walker-drawn carriages... but could never find the place. Thankfully, they worked it into the show in season 9. But keeping them around to generate power would be less efficient and more dangerous than using a river or a waterfall, I think.

Hey guys,

Always been a fan. Definitely the best zombie comic out there (and infinitely better than the TV show). In the end it's about the people living in the post apocalyptic world, not the zombies wandering around eating intestines once in a while.

I'm fascinated about the different ideas you've explored around how humans organize communities and fight for control over them. That for me has been the essence of every arc since meeting the Governor (which is why I think Andrew bro just doesn't get you guys)

This arc is so interesting because we're now nearing the pre-apocalyptic world of political systems, with the Commonwealth instituting order with its caste structure. But what I find missing is the aristocracy. Why the hell would ordinary folk follow Pamela given how incompetent she is in running the place?

Where are her supporters (i.e., the elites) who benefit from this system and would try to maintain the status quo? I would think there'd be many, many more Pamelas and Sebastians with power given the size of the Commonwealth, otherwise they wouldn't have been able to establish such a society in the first place.

Thoughts?

Cheers,
Marcus the city boy who definitely bought into the walker osteoporosis theory...

It's perhaps an economic caste system...which is pretty active in American society today. As for why ordinary folk would follow an incompetent leader? I could pour over history books to give you MANY examples of this occurring, but I really don't need to go further back than Donald Trump.

Well said. There are other elites in the Commonwealth that worked with Pamela to keep things running... we just haven't really met them... yet.

Hello, greetings from Poland!

I really appreciate your work. The current story arc is one of my favourites. Keep it up! Anyway, the reason I'm writing this is because I've been wondering about something for a long time now. Can infection caused by a zombie bite be sexually transmitted? I mean, is this possible, that after having unprotected sex with someone who's been bitten, the other (healthy) person would get sick and die too? Also, can a woman get pregnant from having sex with a bitten man? And if yes - what are the consequences for a baby?

Best wishes,
Marcello

Questions men ask, amirite?

I've covered this, I think... but the bite just kills you... the infection is already there. So there's nothing transferring during sex or pregnancy that isn't already present.

Dear Robert Kirkman
(and Sean too I guess),

I'm a long time fan of both the comic and the Telltale game, and following the final episode of the latter series (curse you

for teasing the barn scene!), I started to wonder about Clementine's age and began looking into the timeline, which has led me to a few questions. I know that approaching you about them is like poking a sleeping bear, but here goes...

This bear gets no sleep. Ask away.

Clementine is 8 years old at the start of the apocalypse. By the end of the first season of the game, she is 9, and we are at issue 12 of the comics. The second picks up when she is 11, putting us around the end of All-Out-War. The third shows her around age 13, which already puts us around the end of the time jump. Seeing as Jesus shows up (once again acting as the Nick Fury of the TWD-verse), it's probably still a little bit before A New Beginning.

Now, this is where things get kind of crazy. Season 4 takes place at least a few years after this, when Clem is somewhere from 15 to 17, which places the game AHEAD of the comics by quite a significant margin. Even if I'm completely off-base with what I've said about her age thus far, AJ was born at least a year into the apocalypse, and is now of walking-talking-and-shooting age, which means that season 4 has to be set in the future, right? Doesn't this make it the farthest canonical thing in the TWD timeline? When you were plotting it out, were you considering the limitations this could potentially impose on the comic (all the walkers haven't rotted away, a new government hasn't swept over the whole nation, etc)?

Telltale Season 4 takes place before the comic. The comic is always the furthest along the timeline. Season 4 happens after the Whisperer War, but before the introduction of the Commonwealth.

Clem is roughly the same age as Carl, perhaps a year older. AJ's age...is a bit trickier and something we wrestled with to fit the timeline and also make him an engaging character to interact with. He was conceived to be 6, but maybe feels more like a grown-ass 6 over the course of the season.

Next question...

Also, what's Clem up to right now in the comics? Is she still working to rescue AJ from Fort McCarroll, or is she already with him and teaching him the rules? Up till now I've been opposed to the idea of bringing Clem into the comics since it

would mean plucking her away from her happy ending, but now that I know that's still way down the line, I would love to see some sort of cameo filling in the gap between seasons 3 and 4!

Sincerely,
A Canadian fan.

Clem's just chilling at Erickson, building something of her own... right now.

Dear talented survivors of TWD team,

Thank you for taking your time to read my question. My enthusiasm lately has been focused towards the nostalgia within the writing and drawings of issue 190 and the relation to issue 48. I was thrilled when Governor Milton fore shadowed the old governor in his infamous "Attack" scene upon the prison. I felt chills as I turned to the last page of issue 190, to see Pamela in full rage mode towards Ricks group and the commonwealth. At least Pamela isn't carrying a katana, RIP Tyreese, from issue 7-46, you are still missed.

Then I'm sure you also got goosebumps from Rick's callback last issue as well.

I would really like to know if Robert Kirkman intends on using nostalgia throughout future plots of the comic?

I'm sure many fans would agree, that we love the feeling of remembering a long lost character that meant something to us and the comics plot. I believe Governor Milton is a very complex character with a roar of emotions, that is hidden behind Kirkman's excellent writing, I hope he never stops writing as he always continues to amaze me with shocking and emotional scenes, most of which I will never forget. Thank you The Walking Dead, I'm 'dead' excited for next months issue.

Sincerely,
Matthew Campbell Baker
Scotland

It's very cool that this series has been running for SO LONG that there can be nostalgia actually WITHIN this series. So yeah, I'd expect to see more references to things from the past as we go on. It's an excellent tool to remind readers of the legacy within this universe.

Dear Walking Dead

Just read #190 and I can't stop thinking about what an amazing job you guys have been doing with this storyline. It's really interesting that Rick has gone through so much violence and how he has grown to push for peace, but unfortunately Governed Milton doesn't see it that way. Why is it important for her to be in charge? It looks like she really is not okay with what looks like Rick trying to takeover. Why wouldn't she want to talk things out with Rick? Doesn't she know that choosing to attack Rick and the survivors will destroy the Commonwealth? I think there's a lot more to Governor Milton than we know. I applaud you guys for making such an amazing series, and I'm very much looking forward to what is to come. Keep up the great work.

Sincerely,
Isaiah McKeighen

Sebastian revealed more of their family history this issue, that coupled with last issue, probably contains all the answers you need. Folks will go to extremes to protect their way of life... and they had a really good one.

So, what are the chances of Rick making a new lady friend out of Governor Milton when this calms down?

The man has got needs ya know?

John Rambo
NJ

Zero percent.

I was DEFINITELY trying to hint at that during various scenes of them interacting... but they were all misdirects. Sorry.

Hi kirkman and sean!

I wanted to ask if there is any connection between the commonwealth civil war and the war that we see going on in TTG's TWD S4. It would explain why the conflict has been on for so long, since commonwealth has a lot of manpower and can afford long wars and why a smaller community like delta was looking for children to turn them into child soldiers. Also if this is not the war that we saw in the games, then will we ever see it taking place in the comics?

With love,
Mohammed
India

Not the same war. Geographically, they're not close. We like that Telltale has their own sandbox to play in, and if we can find organic ways to tie in comic continuity, like the Whisperers, then all the better.

Mr. Kirkman et al,

This is a serious question, and I really hope you'll print this because I gotta know: AM I THE ONLY READER THAT DOESN'T WANT NEGAN TO COME BACK?

I get so sick of people going on and on about wanting him to return and a letter in #190 really took the cake for me, what with Negan carrying baguettes like some kind of French Revolutionary, sweeping in to save the day. For real? THE GUY WAS A SOCIOPATH. HE BASHED GLENN'S HEAD IN WITH ZERO COMPUNCTION OR REMORSE. HE BURNED PEOPLE WITH IRONS.

Negan is not a hero in even the remotest sense of the word.

It's true, by his sendoff I was convinced of his redemption (though the sheen on that may have even worn off a bit), but not that he wasn't still a sociopath and truly better off on his own. Even if you don't print this letter, or even part of it, can you please explain to me, or your readers in general, why it's so easy for people to forget how horrible he was? I feel like that kind of worship of violent authoritarianism is why the human race will never evolve to be a peaceful species.

I mean, case in point--Pam attacking Rick without even letting him explain himself. SO FRUSTRATING. So I know I'm ranting a bit now, but I genuinely would love some insight. Maybe a little hope.

I love a good, impassioned rant. Why do people like Negan? Cause he's a big, swinging dick. Everyone in this comic has done awful things, and perhaps by that reasoning (and understanding him better through HERE'S NEGAN), readers can accept his actions better. Are they right?

Hrrm...

LET ME BE CLEAR... NEGAN IS NOT COMING BACK. WE WILL NOT BE SEEING HIM IN THIS SERIES AGAIN.

The fact that I am reacting this strongly to a fictional character is evidence you all are doing a fantastic job.

Sincerely,
Jason
Rochester, NY

P.S. DON'T BRING NEGAN BACK

WE HEAR YOU. SERIOUSLY. WE DEFINITELY GET THE MESSAGE.

P.P.S. I mean no disrespect to any individual reader; my reaction to the one letter is a culmination of reactions to the numerous calls for Negan's return that seem to flood the pages of Letter Hacks.

NO, NO, NO--FUCK THOSE NEGAN LOVERS. FUCK THEM ALLLLLLLLLLLLL.

(I LOVE NEGAN.)

NO. MORE. NEGAN.

You absolute fucking fuckety fuckers!

You said someone mentioned in #181 letter hacks would die by #200. Dwight's gone. Was that it! I don't think so! Eugene, I'm worried about! And princess got a fair few mentions. Go on kill her! And Negan also got a few comments as usual, although I'm thinking (hoping, hoping) that he's on his way back. Please please.

Carl got a couple of mentions but he's bomb-proof. You know it! He's the future. #lovecarloneeyehardcoremother or are my initial misgivings about Michonne true? Surely not!

Also Kirkman was mentioned but definitely not him, or there's no more comics so I'm not believing that one.

Looking forward to #250!!!

Other mentions in that letter hacks for Spencer, Mercer, Gov Milton, Magna, Lydia, Tyreese!!, JESUS!, Aaron and Maggie.

Someone's gotta and going to Die!!

Waiting for #250 and every issue running up to that.

Love Splattmandu xx

You, uh, missed someone obvious.

Heh.

Hi Kirkman and Co.

Can you let us in on any secrets for the 200th comic? It's getting close. You better not kill off Princess she's pretty awesome!

Thanks
Gemma
Plymouth

Not gonna happen.

Definitely not.

Good day to y'all!

"Storm The Gates" was really good! It's almost given me enough strength to forget about "The Powder Keg"... I still miss Dwight. #JusticeForDwight.

#yourewrong

My first read of the Issue went normal, but it wasn't until I slowly reread it and analyzed everything that I felt the immense fear in the last page... PLEASE don't hurt Hershel!! I saw him with Brianna next to Maggie and I am genuinely going to be upset if he's hurt!

Oh, wait 'til you see what we do with little Hershel NEXT ISSUE! Am I joking? I mean, it's not like we'd ever harm a little kid in this comic, would we?

Knowing that this letter, if printed, will be going into "Aftermath" (the finale to Compendium 4!), I thought it'd be nice to lighten the mood of what-EVER the hell just happened in the issue with some fun, little questions. I hope that's okay!

1. If there was any character either of you would want to bring back— old or recent, no matter how impossible, etc.— who would it be?

Negan.

Tyreese.

2. Would you ever consider doing a competition for the comic fans with the grand prize being a chance to be a character in the series?

No.

Definitely no.

3. Is there anything you can give us about what the next arc, or even Compendium 5 (#193-240), will bring to the story?

Are you kidding me? Not gonna happen.

Nope! Okay... more horses.

4. For Mr. Kirkman, what is the thing that makes you the happiest about writing The Walking Dead?

Being able to do exactly what I want with the story and having the luxury of being able to plan years ahead with the confidence that I'll be able to get there. I feel very fortunate to have that. I may never have it again with any other series. It's EXTREMELY rare.

5. For Mr. Mackiewicz, what has been your absolute favorite letter that you had to exclude but really wanted to?

I can't remember the letters we printed last month, never mind anything that didn't get printed. Pretty sure we printed everything worth seeing printed.

I sometimes worry we contradict ourselves issue to issue... who knows.

6. Finally, and I know this is something you don't like people asking in the past, but I'm really genuinely curious so I hope you will have the Letter Hack space to answer. Will The Covers Volume 2 (and 3) and/or The Cutting Room Floor ever release?

No plans. Sorry?

That doesn't mean no. I intend to publish them at some point.

Thank you for being one of my biggest reasons to live for past 7 years!

(I'm 17, so don't expect that I would have many, or any, other reasons)

Andy Gasal
Vermont, USA

You have so many reasons to live, Andy! Don't discount your youth or I will find a way to vampire that shit away from you!

See you in July for #193! Rest in Power, Rick Grimes.

-Sean Mackiewicz

See you next month! And with Rick Grimes gone... who will be the focus of this series?! I'll give you one fucking fuckity guess, you fuckers.

-Robert Kirkman

This is the end of THE WALKING DEAD.

That's it... it's over... we're done.

I'm sure you have a million questions... and I'm sure you feel as emotional about all this as we do... if not more so. I'm completely willing to bet some of you are angry over this. I get it... I do. I mean... WHY didn't we announce this so that fans would have some time to prepare?

Well... personally... I hate knowing what's coming. As a fan, I hate it when I realize I'm in the third act of a movie and the story is winding down. I hate that I can count commercial breaks and know I'm nearing the end of a TV show. I hate that you can FEEL when you're getting to the end of a book, or a graphic novel.

Some of the BEST episodes of *Game of Thrones* are when they're structured in such a way and paced to perfection so your brain can't tell if it's been watching for 15 minutes or 50 minutes... and when the end comes... you're STUNNED.

I love LONG movies for that very reason. You lose track of time because you went in convinced that you're going to be there for a long time, but the story moves at such an entertaining and engaging pace that by the time the movie's wrapping up... you can't believe it's already over. SURPRISE, it's over!

All I've ever done, all a creator can really do... is tailor-make stories to entertain themselves, and hope the audience feels the same way. That's all I've ever been doing... and it seems to work most of the time.

THE WALKING DEAD has always been built on surprise. Not knowing what's going to happen when you turn the page, who's going to die, how they're going to die... it's been ESSENTIAL to the success of this series. It's been the lifeblood that's been keeping it going all these years, keeping people engaged.

It just felt WRONG and against the very nature of this series not to make the actual end as surprising as all the big deaths... from Shane all the way to Rick.

To be honest... it seemed like a really good idea at the time, but now that we're here and the series is over, I'm having second thoughts. Not so much so that I'm changing course... that would be kind of impossible to do anyway. But... it's possible, as much as I hate to admit it, that I'm genuinely feeling a sense of regret over this whole crazy plan.

I want you to see what went into this though, I want you to understand why, if that's possible. I feel like you all deserve at least that. So let's pull the curtain back in a way... well, I usually try not to do. When it comes to the end of this series... here's how the sausage got made.

Way back in early 2015, Charlie Adlard turned in the cover for issue #142. He had taken my direction, of showing happy people at the Alexandria fair, the booths, the commerce... a very civilized scene, and he'd worked wonders with the concept. It was a cover unlike anything that had come before. To me, it was a real turning point for this series.

The thing is... this was over four years ago at this point... but I knew pretty much every big story point that was going to happen all the way up to this final issue. A couple years prior, around 2013 or so, I'd even told Charlie at San Diego Comic-Con what the gist of this final issue was. I revealed how the story would end with Carl reading his daughter a storybook about Rick's exploits. I just didn't know exactly what issue that story would fall in. I knew the end... but I didn't know where it would fall. I figured... somewhere past issue #300. As I've said publicly... I've always wanted to reach that number, that big, round *Cerebus* number that all the insane indy comics creators try to chase.

But when I saw the cover to #142... it dawned on me. "Oh, shit... we're already at the fair! The Commonwealth is just around the corner... and... oh, man... there's no WAY I'm going to make it to issue #300." It was the first time I realized that I just didn't have enough story worked out to get there. I didn't know exactly how long we'd fight the Whisperers or how long we'd be spending in the Commonwealth before Rick would bring about his own demise... but I knew the whole run wouldn't be another 150 issues.

I started working things out... trying to figure out how long things would run... and it dawned on me... I had about 50 issues until I got to my planned end. I always have to keep collections in mind. Now that we do 48-issue compendiums (that are very popular, our most popular format), it would be really irresponsible to wrap this series up in a way that resulted in compendium readers having to buy a different format to finish the series. So I was happy that it appeared things would work out where this series would wrap up nicely in the fourth compendium.

But I wasn't quite sure it was time to wrap things up.

I love writing this series. It's been my life's dream. So when I first came to this realization... my first instinct was, "Well, I just need to come up with more story". I even spent a few weeks trying to come up with new plot, new story detours to push the ending I had in mind back and keep things going... for a while, possibly even a long while... an extra compendium, maybe two.

And... again, pulling the curtain back... this has happened before. I'd already abandoned one planned ending to keep the series going. Yep... that's an exclusive I've never revealed anywhere.

Let's go off on a tangent for a moment. When the story got to Alexandria in issue #72, things were going to go pretty much as they did; Rick and his crew were going to have trouble fitting in because of everything they'd been through. That would lead to conflict within Alexandria, and it would eventually lead to Rick taking over. The big storyline NO WAY OUT ended with Rick proclaiming that Alexandria was a place worth fighting for, that they could no longer keep moving from place to place... they had to take a stand, lay down roots and start building from there. Their nomad days were behind them.

Well, for years... that had been planned to be... the end. Rick would make his proclamation, and the speech would end with a big close-up on Rick's face, you'd turn the page, and Rick's face would be the same, only it was a statue... and you'd zoom out and see the full statue with some vines growing on the bottom of it... cracks forming... and you'd realize that it was quite OLD.

We'd keep zooming out until we saw that the statue was in Alexandria, the same place where he gave the speech, but it was different. It was old and rundown, broken windows and missing doors. We would keep zooming out until a zombie walked by, then another... and we'd see that Rick had brought them to Alexandria, given this grand speech about rebuilding civilization and SUCCEEDED to the point that they built a statue to honor him... but in the end, the dead won, society crumbled again, this time seemingly for good... and that was it.

It was a TERRIBLE ending. Bleak, sad... made the whole story pointless. What can I say... I was young and most of the endings I wrote or came up with way back then... were pretty bleak. So that ending... in hindsight was embarrassingly bad, but more than that, I wasn't ready to end this series. Not by a long shot.

You have to understand, when I started writing this series, I had no clue I'd make it to issue #12. So the thought of having a book that ran 100 issues was insane. So when this book really took off in its second year, I was able to make far reaching plans for the future, but even at that point, a 100-issue run still seemed impossible.

So when I found myself staring down the barrel of a completed 100-issue series, I just wasn't ready to let go. I was having too much fun. Think about how things would have gone if I'd wrapped things up then... no Negan, no Ezekiel, no All Out War, no time jump, no Magna, no Whisperers, no Commonwealth, no Princess... and a really crummy ending to boot.

To top it off... shortly after I scrapped that planned ending and decided to keep going, I came up with pretty much the exact ending of this issue, which I felt was much more fitting and rewarding.

I'm glad I made the decision I did back then. I have no regrets.

This time though, things were very different. As I worked to come up with ways to expand the story, none of it felt right. Everything felt like an unnecessary detour... it was, for lack of a better word, filler. The harder I tried to come up with new places to go, the clearer it was to me that this is what this story needed... it needed to end.

So like I said... it seemed like a good idea at the time. FOUR YEARS ago this plan seemed rock solid. Never tell anyone, keep it secret, and even go as far as soliciting fake issues that will never exist so that we can really surprise people. Oh, man... I thought this was going to be great.

I worked it out with Charlie right away. He'd always been pushing to end on a high note. He was with me, all the way, as long as I didn't run this series into the ground. Charlie just wanted to make this book special. If I had a solid plan for 300 issues, he'd have made it happen, but if I started turning in stories Charlie thought were lame... I would have heard about it and he'd have convinced me to end the series. So when we talked about the plan, Charlie was excited, his fear of us overstaying our welcome and keeping this book going well past its popularity were quelled.

I'll say it again, I love (loved... oh, god, I'm not ready for past tense) writing this series. I really don't want it to end. In fact, I've been... kind of unsettled since I wrote the script for this issue. The whole thing just feels... weird.

In a way, killing this series has been a lot like killing a major character. Much, much harder... but the same feeling. I don't WANT to do it. I'd rather keep going... but the story is telling me what it wants and what it needs. This needs to happen. Whether I want it or not.

It just feels right... while also feeling... terrible.

The main point of all this is... well, I'm scared. Most of my professional life has been spent on this series. Countless hours are dedicated to this, month in and month out. More than anything in the last 16 years... this is going to fundamentally change my life. So I'm terrified.

When my fingers typed out "THE END" on the keyboard as I finished this script... I thought I'd feel relief, or some sliver of pride in a job well done, but it was really just... dread. I wasn't ready for it to be over... but it was.

It is.

Oddly, as unsure as I feel about ending the story, I feel confident in how I ended it. I've been building to this for years, and it does feel good to end on such a happy note. To know that everything these characters lived through meant something. To see that Michonne got to find her daughter, find peace with her life, and even have a grandchild... that feels good. That the world is fixed... and at peace, that in some ways it's even better than before... that's meaningful. And to see Carl in that rocking chair, reading happily to his daughter, to know that's the life Rick wanted him to have... that makes me happy.

I hope it makes you happy, too. Even if you're upset at not getting to spend time in this world anymore.

I'm upset, too. I'm going to miss it as much as you will, if not more so. It breaks my heart that I had to end it, and we have to move on... but I just love this world too much to stretch things out until it doesn't live up to what I want it to be.

I hope you understand.

I hope you, dear reader, know how much I appreciate the gift you have given me. I got to tell my story exactly how I wanted to, for 193 issues, and end it on my terms, with no interference at all along the way... at any point. That's such a rare thing, and it doesn't exist without the unyielding support this series got from readers like you. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Tony Moore, for drawing the first six issues. Thank you, Cliff Rathburn, for countless hours spent shaping black and white art with gray tones. Thank you, Rus Wooton, for turning my words into art month after month. Thank you, Stefano Gaudiano, for shaping Charlie's pencils for nearly 100 issues. Thank you, Aubrey Sitterson and Sina Grace, for your time keeping this insanity in check. Thank you, Sean Mackiewicz, for seeing this project all the way to the end, despite thinking each compendium would be your last... and, y'know, doing a great job along the way. Thank you, Arielle Basich, for keeping Sean sane and doing the heavy lifting. Thank you, Andres Juarez, for keeping this book looking fresh after being on the shelf for over a decade. Thank you, Carina Taylor, for doing your part to do the same. Thank you, Dave Stewart, for making Charlie's art pop on comic shelves the world over. Thank you, Dave McCaig, for you know what. Thank you, Ryan Ottley, for that amazing art in issue #75 that may never get collected. Thank you, Cory Walker, for your wise council before I even started this series. Thank you, Jim Valentino, for so many things, including saying, "Change the title so you can own it." Thank you, Shawn Kirkham, for always having an ear to the ground for what this world needs. Thank you to the team at Skybound, who work

tirelessly to bring you everything THE WALKING DEAD you could ever want and more. Thank you, Erik Larsen, for the undying support, even to this day. Thank you, Eric Stephenson, for the years of strategy sessions that made this series a continued success. Thank you to the evolving staff at Image Comics that was invaluable over the last decade and a half... especially the accounting department. Thank you, David Alpert, for your part in turning this into a truly worldwide, multi-media phenomenon, and all that came with it and somehow so much more than that. Thank you, Shep Rosenman and Lee Rosenbaum, for crossing the Ts and dotting the Is so I can keep all my Ts and not lose my Is. Thank you, Chris Simonian, for going to war and winning. Thank you, Allen Grodsky, for going to war and winning. Thank you, John Campisi and the team at CAA, for continuing the fight. Thank you, Frank Darabont, for going into House of Secrets in Burbank and saying, "This one." Thank you, Gale Anne Hurd, for helping turn "this one" into something real. Thank you, Charles H. Eglee, for being the original showrunner and setting us up for success. Thank you, Jack LoGiudice, for making me feel welcome in the writer's room on day one... by being mean to me in the most entertaining ways. Thank you, Glen Mazzara, for keeping the fire warm. Thank you, Scott Gimple, for taking the show to new heights and for caring enough to say, "No spoilers, dear God, no more spoilers." Thank you, Angela Kang, for the future and beyond. Thank you, Greg Nicotero, for making the zombies (er, walkers) REAL. Thank you, Chris Hardwick, for telling the world every week that there's a comic book worth checking out. Thank you to the ten thousand people who work on the now FOUR TV shows based on THE WALKING DEAD for pouring their hearts into this and loving this world as much if not more than I do.

But most of all, thank you, Charlie Adlard, for sitting at the table, day in and day out, and devoting more hours to THE WALKING DEAD than anyone. I couldn't have asked for a better partner. It's been a dream come true to get to shape this world together, with you. This never would have happened without you. I can't believe we made it all the way to the end, my friend.

Oh my god... I can't believe it's really over.

-Robert Kirkman

P.S. Negan Lives.

On the following pages, you can see Charlie Adlard's lineart for the covers of #194-196. They were used for solicitation so that the book would continue to appear in the distributor catalogue to hide the fact that the series was ending. As a gag, they kind of tell the story of Carl dying... that's not really anything that was intended to happen, I just thought it would be a fun thing to explore on the covers in a way that wouldn't reveal anything. It was very difficult to do covers that didn't telegraph Rick's death, or the time jump for this final issue.

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

WALKINGDEAD@SKYBOUND.COM

Season's greetings, Letter Hacks! Now's the time of year that we can be thankful for the psychopaths, sycophants, miscreants and degenerates that write in every month. And all the "balanced" people, too. We wouldn't have it any other way.

Happy Holidays! Letters!

Having worked on a zombie book long enough to have thought about this stuff waaaay too much. I feel that it's my duty to pass on the one thing that doesn't get used nearly enough in zombie stories... Trip wire. Simplest line of defense.

Maybe Robert has an entire story line with trip wire in it that I haven't read. But, for what it's worth, take it. Run with it. All yours free and clear!

Okay. Back to the rainbow corp.
Peaz,
Aaron Kuder

Hey, check it out! Green Lantern: New Guardians' artist A-to-the-motherfuckin'-K! Well, it's like on Breaking Bad where the writers have to leave out a couple steps so people aren't really cooking meth... Robert doesn't want folks knowing how to REALLY survive a zombie apocalypse. Selfish? You decide.

Also, there are things, like tripwire that make perfect sense, but at the same time are used so often in action movies that it seems far-fetched and a little out of place (to me at least) if it were to appear in these stories. That said, I wouldn't rule it out from ever happening.

Mr. Kirkman,

There should be an issue of THE WALKING DEAD where they go to your house and find the scripts to the next few issues of THE WALKING DEAD. That would make for an interesting story arc.

Kyle Genoni
Pleasanton, CA

Maybe Grant Morrison could pull something like that off.

I certainly couldn't.

As I write this, Superstorm Sandy has just passed through my town in pastoral Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Even 35 miles from ocean, we were battered with 75+ mph gusts for two solid hours. Trees uprooted and devastation everywhere. When dawn broke, the scene was even worse. I lost trees. My neighbor had a pine crush his car and house. No power, water, fuel. Nothing. Also growing up at the Jersey Shore, the scenes of destruction I accessed through the phone were numbing.

With nothing much to do, I walked to a local Exxon and waited on line for a cup of coffee. For an hour. People talked about the storm. Someone mentioned it was like the apocalypse. I have to admit, like many Walking Dead and general comic/zombie fans, my mind went immediately to the prospect of this unlikely, yet now strangely true, scenario. One could see how in any society, it would only take one person to storm the store and all would erupt in chaos. I thought of The Rise of the Governor book, how the early times after the breakout were described. It was a good distraction from a myriad of crazy feelings; loss of property, sad for friends, lucky to be alive - will work be open the next day?

I think at its heart, this comic is and always has been about people. I know that has been said before. But after this day, I will never read a story within these pages the same way again. Rick and the crew give us hope. The story is about as real as it gets, when you think of how quickly society would de-evolve given certain situations. But even through it all, we can move forward. Jersey is a strong place with good people. It will take a lot of work, but it will get done.

Thanks for making my favorite form of entertainment a little more than words and pictures on a page.

Patrick Bivona
Lebanon Borough, New Jersey

Patrick, good to hear you, as well as the other Sandy affected readers, are safe! Coming out of a disaster like this, there were still the inevitable stories of looters piloting boats toward flooded beach homes or impersonating electrical workers to get into abandoned apartments... let's face it. The knuckleheads won't ever quit, but they can be outweighed by the folks banding together to help out their neighbors and complete strangers. Which there were a LOT of.

I often talk about this with Scott Gimple in the Walking Dead writer's room. A lot of what happens in this book is due to my belief that if civilization were to fall, we wouldn't unite, we would turn on each other. Which, by extension, seems to mean that I believe people are inherently bad, and civilization keeps them at bay. I don't think I really believe this, I think it's more that I believe this is POSSIBLY true. I'm grateful when I hear stories of people coming together to deal with Sandy, that I seem to be proven wrong.

KIRKMAN,

You bearded swine! Have you no shame? No decency? You dishonor yourself and your family!

Maybe I should back up and explain my rant, but the temptation to hurl a few more insults is strong, you scruffy-looking tease.

So, this Michonne special issue thing totally sucked. I don't say that lightly. I already knew it was a reprint of her first appearance with just a little something extra. I already knew it was from Playboy, so I didn't think it would be too racy. I was not, however, prepared to deal with the handful of wishy-washy pages I found within.

I learned nothing new about the character, and the "voice over" bits of her talking to her dead boyfriend seemed a little wimpy for the woman who went at the Governor with pliers and a blowtorch.

I guess "betrayed" is too strong a word; I just feel a little let down is all...

Everyone else in the TWD crew is awesome, and I love you. However, Kirkman, you're on thin ice. You're gonna have to cut off Rick's other hand or a foot or something to redeem yourself.

Jesse Memphis, TN

I'll get right on that! (Sorry, Rick.) In my defense, I'll just say that those were Michonne's inner thoughts, which we've never seen, but we have seen, over time that her gruff exterior, was for the most part, a facade. So there.

Robert and co,

First off, I pretty much hate you. You failed to print my last letter when I was so praising of you. Now, I'm pissed. You leave Maggie at the Hilltop and now we're just supposed to forget about her and Sophia? It's not that I like Maggie so much as a character; I actually like the dynamic between Carl and Sophia. It's sad that we won't get to see them together for now. It's been great to see them grow as a "couple." And now that's dead (at least for now). That sucks. Secondly, after reading the letter hacks in issue 103, I decided to try out the stroganoff with beef jerky. Surprisingly good. The jerky actually does soften up a bit. Not so much that you can't tell it's jerky, but it's still pretty good. That will now become my "I'm too broke to get real food" meal in place of Ramen. So thank you for that. I guess I can forgive you for the first transgression thanks to this.

I honestly don't know if anyone's ever made that before... I just made it up for that scene. I'd never heard of anyone doing that, I wasn't even sure it would be edible... you're a brave man!

And now on to Sean. You don't have the same snarky humor that Sina had, but your commentary is still pretty funny. And yes, snarky is a word. Look it up if you must.

There's lots of things I don't have that Sina does: a fashion sense, the ability to draw real well, a feminine name...

Is that snarky enough for you? #youllneverbesina

Keep up the good work guys. Your ability to make people passionately hate you and fall head over heels in love with your book is amazing.

JD Shoemate

Uh... thanks?

So I'm slowly making my way through the second compendium, and I noticed something: What is it with Robert Kirkman's love affair with the big, strong, dumb, noble, loyal archetype? Rick's second-in-command throughout this series has generally been a man who not only fits this type, but also seems to have some unspoken manlove for Rick. First, it was Shane. Then, Tyrese. Now it's Abraham. What's the deal, Kirkman? Not that there's anything wrong with it, but man, I feel like parts of this series is just an exploration into your bottom-to-bear power fantasies.

Eugene

Have you ever Googled “Robert Kirkman bear”?

Oh, here we go...

Dear Walking Dead Team,

What the hell is Glenn’s last name? I figure, since he’s dead now and all... I’d like to know.

Thanks for satisfying my curiosity.

Vince
Modesto, CA

I honestly don’t believe I ever gave him one. He’s got one on the show, and I believe Steven Yeun actually came up with it. So... I haven’t bothered to remember it. Screw that guy.

Well hey there, Mr. Kirkman!

Just wanted to say that Negan is SICK (in both the good and the bad sense), loved issue 103! And my question:

I read somewhere that you regret cutting off Rick’s hand. Is this true? I really think this was a vital part of the book and made him into what he is “today.”

Greetings from Buglaria,

Rosi

I don’t regret doing it, I never regret story decisions on this book. BUT, that said, it’s led to some difficulties, and there are storytelling cheats that we do from time to time. Every now and then Rick does something he just shouldn’t be able to do. So, due to those limitations... I wouldn’t do it again if I had the chance (TV SHOW?) but that doesn’t mean I regret it.

I’ll make this simple and quick, after 2 plus years into the zombie apocalypse (I’m guessing that’s the right time frame), where the HELL do you find bread to make a sandwich??

PS. This comic is like crack and I’ve been on board since day 1.

Ramon

Taco shells are where it’s at.

You can still MAKE bread. The ingredients would keep. Shut up.

Dear Robert and Sean,

Carl! The kid has insane amounts of machismo. If I have one hope for this book, it is that Carl gets his first legit kill with Negan. Let that crazy kid go wild with Lucille and play some sweet music on Negan’s skull.

Daniel Bellay

What the-- Legit kill? Shanel! Ben! A six pack of Saviors last issue! What more do you want?

Seriously... what’s a “legit kill?” Is that like a kill where a woman’s body activates to shut the kill down? Is that even funny? I don’t know, it’s late... I’m just going to leave it in just in case. Shut up, Bockrath--I’m tired. I’d like to see you do better!

Dear Robert,

Okay...normally I’d have jumped all emotional to my computer and trashed you for killing off Glenn (like I did when you shot Carl in the eye). But I decided to sit on it for a few months and let it set in. Now let’s go back in time...

It’s a Sunday afternoon and I have the long anticipated Walking Dead Issue #100. I tell everyone to leave me alone, I am going to have a great afternoon and read my favorite comic. It’s a great triumph for me as I have been with you since issue #1 and we did it...Issue #100. So...I finish the book...and I say out loud, “Wow, I didn’t enjoy that AT ALL!”

I was going to tell you that while reading the comic, when Glenn says, “I can’t stop thinking about tomorrow.” I said OUT LOUD, “Except there ain’t gonna be no tomorrow for you, Glenn.” I would have called that bad storytelling. But that’s the old me.

I was going to tell you the “Iny Meny Miny Moe” thing was a direct rip off of Natural Born Killers, right down to the “My Mother says...” But that’s the old me.

I could say Negan is The Governor 2 and I was really going to trash you. But that’s the old me.

Looking back I’m GLAD you killed Glenn. It was horribly dramatic. The image of the close up of Glenn evoked the horror of Romero’s Night of the Living Dead. I liked that. The senseless disregard for “human” life was Dawn of the Dead on steroids.

Though I still don’t care much for most of the characters or the sometimes soap opera-ish relationships. The book is fine. I like that already by #102 we see that Rick has a plan. Oh this is gonna get GOOD.

I want to tell you that The Walking Dead is the ONLY comic book I read nowadays since all my favorite Marvel titles got “strange” and don’t feel like “home” anymore. Home is now The Walking Dead for better or for worse. I LIKE it even if it makes me feel like shit like issue #100. Thanks, it was a GREAT RIDE.

Now another thing I’d like to bring up I was quite horrified to see after the letters page was uh...Walking Dead lunch boxes. You do know that this comic book is for adults right? I’ll explain it to you in a way you might understand. Do you want some fuckitty fuck shitty shit seven fuck shit year olds reading your fuckitty fuck fuck shit, ‘cause he fucking fuckitty fuck seen it on a lunch fuck shit box. Put the TV show on it

instead if you must. See, then it will be a big collectors’ item.

The lunch boxes are for collectors... not for kids. Adults eat lunch too, y’know.

I have a bone to pick with you Robert and Image. What’s with the alternate covers? I am not a collector anymore, but I remembered when your grand epic zombie graphic novel came out, I knew it was something good and I bought 2 issues of #1 right there as soon as it came out. It was a long time ago, but I KNEW I did. I also know now that they are valuable, so I figured I’d give one to my 27 year old daughter to keep for a few decades for the grandkids. So I checked. Oh I DID buy 2 Issues of #1 alright! I bought the valuable one and the fuckitty fuck shit issue that’s not worth a fuckin’ shit fuck shit! I gave the one good one I had to my daughter and the shit one I gave to her stepson who is a teenage fan of your comic and the show. Why would you do that to your fans right out of the gate with Issue #1 and FUCK them like that by printing alternate covers? Being with you since issue ONE and not being one of the TV show coat-tail riders, you and Image OWE me an ORIGINAL issue ONE. Or your insides will be on your outsides.

I disagree that I owe you an original issue one. What version of issue one did you buy that’s worthless?

Now back to the book...I think you should consider ENDING IT SOON. It’s great as it is. Just kill everybody off already. I think you should KILL IT BY ISSUE 150. Let it STAND ALONE. The BEST TV series are only 3 or 4 seasons, that’s what makes them special. Though I think yours could go a good 5 or maybe 6 seasons. Anyway I’m looking forward to EVERYBODY getting killed in the comic book. Your fans are way too rabid...um...passionate about the book and the PEOPLE in it. But relax fans, they are not REAL PEOPLE. It’s just a comic book.

I promise you I will not be ending this series at issue 150. You may not like it, or maybe you do, I can’t quite tell, but thankfully, other people really enjoy it, including me... and Charlie, and Rus, and Cliff (I think)... hell, even Sean likes it. So we’ll keep going.

Have FUN, Robert. Kick ass. The book is great. Rick does stupid shit all the time that gets people killed...I think it’s GREAT! I can’t wait to see what mess they get into this time. Enjoy it, but end it...for the books sake.

One last thing...after reading issue #100...I’m now rooting for the zombies.

Sincerely,
Victor Gaspar

P.S. I’ll be waiting for my Issue #1. You better sign it too. That’s interest.

Sorry.

Hi Robert,

So as a long time reader and a student of writing, after issue 100, I decided I would make an effort to write to you with a question. Couple of things writing courses and books highlight, is:

- 1) Make us care about the characters.
- 2) Make inspired/unexpected choices.

Obviously the success of Walking Dead can be attributed to both these factors. The latter being a highlight of the series, I mean where else would someone else have the balls to kill off main characters like you do. Glenn’s death was emotional, upsetting gut wrenching and many other things because we cared about him and had been with him for so long.

But then I started wondering at what stage do you hit a point on diminishing returns in terms of the story? Right now the original group is just down to a few people, people whom the readers have been heavily invested in since the beginning of the series. How far do you go before the two points I made earlier are in conflict with each other?

At this rate somewhere down the road we are going to have a totally different cast of characters and players. Aren’t you worried that people won’t care as much cause they don’t know any of these new people? How do you keep readers invested if there is no one to invest in? Just wondering what you thought.

Keep up the good work.

Z

Ah... this old discussion is rearing its ugly head. "I like this book a lot, but how are you going to keep it interesting forever? Maybe you should end it at 150." Well, all I can really say is that I know what’s ahead, and I think there’s a lot to look forward to. I’ve got some really cool things planned that are unlike anything that’s appeared in the book thus far, and I’m confident I can keep this story compelling for many years to come... and if I ever run out of ideas, and feel the book is starting to suck--I’ll just have aliens invade, which I predict will happen around issue 275. You have been warned.

And speaking of diminishing returns, we are out. Be back next month and celebrate Charlie Adlard’s 100th issue of THE WALKING DEAD. This is only my fourth issue. I got to get a few tips from him on how to keep this relationship fresh.

-Sean Mackiewicz

And do it quickly, Sean. Sheesh. Okay kids... it’s been fun, and I really hope you dug this issue... I’ll see you all back here next month for Charlie’s 100th issue. It’s going to ROCK.

-Robert Kirkman